MEMOIRS OF GRIMALDI

EDITED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

George Cruikshank

ILLUSTRATED BY

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

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PAWNING A PAIR OF TROUSERS FOR MEDICINE.

JAMES FRANCIS THOMAS lives in Pontnewynydd, near Pontypool, Monmouthshire. He is now twenty-three years of age, living with his mother, a widow. Some eleven years ago, then a mere boy, he went to work in a coal-pit as a miner, in order to assist his mother in rearing her family of little children. Soon, however, the little fellow broke down in health; but the necessities of the family seemed to require it, and he continued to toil in the mines, suffering all the time from the effects of indigestion, an agonizing symptom being asthma, in such a troublesome form that the boy was unable to lie in bed. Working through the day, and resting as best he could in an arm-chair during the night, naturally undermined his constitution. Year by year his health grew worse and worse, until at last rheumatism came with all its dreadful agony. One joint after another became swollen and inflamed, so that he was obliged to stop work. In this sad plight the now young man was confined to the house for two long years, suffering all that mortal could endure. One physician after another was called upon to treat his complaint, but with no benefit, for the poor fellow continued to grow worse and worse. Hoping to find some means of relief, a consultation of doctors was held, when it was decided that an organic disease of the heart existed in an incurable form, and that medical aid could not afford relief. He was given up to die. These years of expensive medical treatment had exhausted the little savings of the mother, and they had no money to buy even the necessaries of life. But a fond mother never gives up in despair. There was one spark of hope left. Someone had told her of a remedy that had cured so many cases—even when as hopeless as this one seemed to be—and the mother's love went out for her dear boy. But how to get the medicine was the question. Their money was entirely gone. The boy had a new pair of trousers that he had been too ill to wear, and the mother reasoned within herself, "If the boy is to die he will not need them, so I may as well pledge them for medicine with an effort to save his life." Strange as it may appear, the bottles of medicine procured at the chemist-shop in Pontypool with the money obtained from the pawnbroker effected a cure in this hopeless case, which had been pronounced as incurable. But it is only just to say that if the chemist had known of the wants of the family the medicine could have been obtained without a visit to the pawnbroker. It is now nearly two years since this took place, and young James Francis Thomas has been working in the coal-pit under ground ever since, earning extra pay for over-work, which he is able to perform. Of course he never had organic disease of the heart, as was supposed. The palpitation, rheumatism, and asthma, were mere symptoms of the real disease, which was dyspepsia, or indigestion, for which the remedy was especially adapted. Those who wish to communicate with this young man can write to him at the above address, and he will vouch for the curative properties of Seigel's Syrup, the article that effected this almost miraculous cure. The following letter is from a chemist, who thought the facts should be made known:—"James Francis Thomas, of Pontnewynydd, near Pontypool, age twenty-three, collier, was ill for nine years, unable to do any work for three years, never lay down in bed for nine years, had to sleep in a stooping posture, was treated by nearly all the doctors for miles around, who generally stated his complaint to be rheumatism and heart disease of a chronic nature, and beyond all power of cure. When hope had nearly died out he was persuaded to try Seigel's Syrup; and, to the delight of his relatives and astonishment of his neighbours, after taking half a bottle he could lie down in bed. After taking one bottle he went to work. Has now taken two bottles, and on with the third, and is quite well and strong. His mother is in raptures, and can talk of nothing else but this marvellous cure, and wishes me to make it known."

"East-street Mills, East-street, Cambridge Heath,
"London, E.C., July 24, 1882.

"Sir,—It gives me great pleasure to be able to add my testimony in favour of your valuable Syrup as a curative agent. I had suffered for some length of time from a severe form of Indigestion, and the long train of distressing symptoms following that disease. I had tried all possible means to get relief, by seeking the best medical advice. I had swallowed sufficient of their stuff to float a man-of-war, so to speak, but all to no avail. A friend of mine, coming on the scene in the midst of my sufferings, brought with him a bottle of your Seigel's Syrup; he advised me to try it, stating he felt confident it would benefit me. Being weary of trying so many drugs, I condemned it before trial, thinking it could not possibly do me any good, but ultimately determined to take the Syrup. After doing so for a short time, it worked such a change in me that I continued taking it for nearly two months, and I then felt thoroughly cured, for I have discontinued its use for five weeks, and feel in the best of health, and can partake of any kind of food with ease and comfort. I am therefore thankful to you that, through the instrumentality of your valuable medicine, I am restored to the state of health I now enjoy.

"Yours truly, W. S. FORSTER.

"To Mr. A. J. White, 17, Farringdon Road."

Mr. J. B. Senior, Chemist, Kirkgate, Wakefield, writes, Dec. 15, 1880:—"I have sold a great number of bottles, and numbers of patients speak wonders of it. The above is the truth in regard to Seigel's Syrup."

"St. Mary's Street, Peterborough, Nov. 29, 1881.

"Sir,—It gives me great pleasure to inform you of the benefit I have received from Seigel's Syrup. I have been troubled for years with dyspepsia; but after a few doses of the Syrup I found relief, and after taking two bottles of it I feel quite cured.—I am, Sir, yours truly, WILLIAM BRENT."

"Mr. A. J. White."

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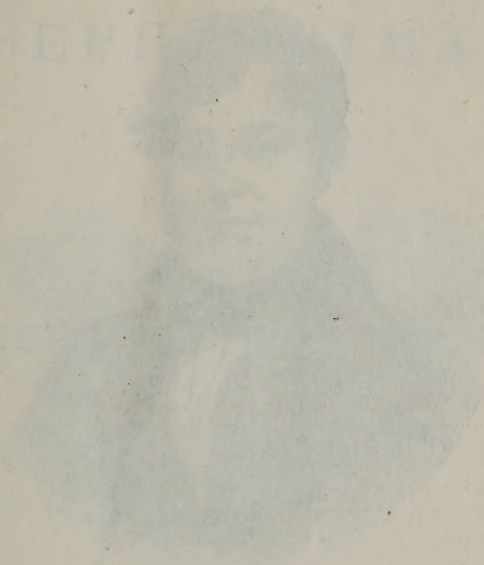

JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

MEMOIRS

OF

JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

EDITED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH THIRTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

IT is some years now, since we first conceived a strong veneration for C'owns, and an intense anxiety to know what they did with themselves out of pantomime time, and off the stage. As a child, we were accustomed to pester our relations and friends with questions out of number concerning these gentry;—whether their appetite for sausages and such like wares was always the same, and if so, at whose expense they were maintained; whether they were ever taken up for pilfering other people's goods, or were forgiven by everybody because it was only done in fun; how it was they got such beautiful complexions, and where they lived; and whether they were born Clowns, or gradually turned into Clowns as they grew up. On these and a thousand other points our curiosity was insatiable. Nor were our speculations confined to Clowns alone: they extended to Harlequins, Pantaloons, and Columbines, all of whom we believed to be real and veritable personages, existing in the same forms and characters all the year round. How often have we wished that the Pantaloon were our godfather! and how often thought that to marry a Columbine would be to attain the highest pitch of all human felicity!

The delights—the ten thousand million delights of a pantomime—come streaming upon us now,—even of the pantomime which came lumbering down in Richardson's waggons at fair-time to the dull little town in which we had the honour to be brought up, and which a long row of small boys, with frills as white as they could be washed, and hands as clean as they would come, were taken to behold the glories of, in fair daylight.

We feel again all the pride of standing in a body on the platform, the observed of all observers in the crowd below, while the junior usher pays away twenty-four ninepences to a stout gentleman under a Gothic arch, with a hoop of variegated lamps swinging over his head. Again we catch a glimpse (too brief, alas!) of the lady with a green parasol in her hand, on the outside stage of the next show but one, who supports herself on one foot, on the back of a majestic horse, blotting-paper coloured and white; and once again our eyes open wide with wonder, and our hearts throb with emotion, as we deliver our cardboard check into the very hands of the Harlequin himself, who, all glittering with spangles, and dazzling with many colours, deigns to give us a word of encouragement and commendation as we pass into the booth!

But what was this—even this—to the glories of the inside, where, amid the smell of sawdust and orange-

peel, sweeter far than violets to youthful noses, the first play being over, the lovers united, the Ghost appeased, the Baron killed, and everything made comfortable and pleasant,—the pantomime itself began! What words can describe the deep gloom of the opening scene, where a crafty Magician, holding a young lady in bondage was discovered, studying an enchanted book to the soft music of a gong!—or in what terms can we express the thrill of ecstasy with which, his magic power opposed by superior art, we beheld the monster himself converted into Clown! What mattered it that the stage was three yards wide, and four deep? *we* never saw it. We had no eyes, ears, or corporal senses but for the pantomime. And when its short career was run, and the Baron previously slaughtered, coming forward with his hand upon his heart, announced that for that favour Mr. Richardson returned his most sincere thanks, and the performances would commence again in a quarter of an hour, what jests could equal the effects of the Baron's indignation and surprise, when the Clown, unexpectedly peeping from behind the curtain, requested the audience "not to believe it, for it was all gammon!" Who but a Clown could have called forth the roar of laughter that succeeded; and what witchery but a Clown's could have caused the junior usher himself to declare aloud, as he shook his sides and smote his knee in a moment of irrepressible joy, that that was the very best thing he had ever heard said!

We have lost that Clown now; he is still alive though, for we saw him only the day before last Bartholomew Fair, eating a real saveloy, and we are sorry to say he had deserted to the illegitimate drama, for he was seated on one of "Clark's Circus" waggons:—we have lost that Clown and that pantomime, but our relish for the entertainment still remains unimpaired. Each successive Boxing-day finds us in the same state of high excitement and expectation. On that eventful day, when new pantomimes are played for the first time at the two great theatres, and at twenty or thirty of the little ones, we still gloat as formerly upon the bills which set forth tempting descriptions of the scenery in staring red and black letters, and still fall down upon our knees, with other men and boys, upon the pavement by shop-doors, to read them down to the very last line. Nay, we still peruse with all eagerness and avidity the exclusive accounts of the coming wonders in the theatrical newspapers of the Sunday before, and still believe them as devoutly as we did before twenty years' experience had shown us that they are always wrong.

With these feelings upon the subject of pantomimes, it is no matter of surprise that when we first heard that Grimaldi had left some memoirs of his life behind him, we were in a perfect fever until we had perused the manuscript. It was no sooner placed in our hands by "the adventurous and spirited Publisher,"—(if our recollection serve us, this is the customary style of the complimentary little paragraphs regarding new books which usually precede advertisements about Savory's clocks in the newspapers,)—than we sat down at once and read it every word.

See how pleasantly things come about, if you let them take their own course! This mention of the manuscript brings us at once to the very point we are anxious to reach, and we should have gained long ago, if we had not travelled into those irrelevant remarks concerning Pantomimic representations.

For about a year before his death, Grimaldi was employed in writing a full account of his life and adventures. It was his chief occupation and amusement; and as people who write their own lives, even in the midst of very many occupations, often find time to extend them to a most inordinate length, it is no wonder that his account of himself was exceedingly voluminous.

This manuscript was confided to Mr. Thomas Egerton Wilks, to alter and revise, with a view to its publication. Mr. Wilks, who was well acquainted with Grimaldi and his connexions, applied himself to the task of condensing it throughout, and wholly expunging considerable portions, which, so far as the public were concerned, possessed neither interest nor amusement: he likewise interspersed here and there the substance of such personal anecdotes as he had gleaned from the writer in desultory conversation. While he was thus engaged, Grimaldi died.

Mr. Wilks having by the commencement of September concluded his labours, offered the manuscript to the present publisher, by whom it was shortly afterwards purchased unconditionally, with the full consent and concurrence of Mr. Richard Hughes, Grimaldi's executor.

The present editor of these volumes has felt it necessary to say thus much in explanation of their origin, in order to establish beyond doubt the unquestionable authenticity of the memoirs they contain.

His own share in them is stated in a few words. Being much struck by several incidents in the manuscript—such as the description of Grimaldi's infancy, the burglary, the brother's return from sea under the extraordinary circumstances detailed, the adventure of the man with the two fingers on his left hand, the account of Mackintosh and his friends, and many other passages,—and thinking that they might be related in a more attractive manner, (they were at that time told in the first person, as if by Grimaldi himself, although they had necessarily lost any original manner which his recital might have imparted to them;) he accepted a proposal from the publisher to edit the book, and *has* edited it to the best of his ability, altering its form throughout, and making such other alterations as he conceived would improve the narration of the facts, without any departure from the facts themselves.

He has merely to add, that there has been no *book-making* in this case. He has not swelled the quantity of matter, but materially abridged it. The account of Grimaldi's first courtship may appear lengthy in its present form, but it has undergone a double and most comprehensive process of abridgment. The old man was garrulous upon a subject on which the youth had felt so keenly; and as the feeling did him honour in both stages of life, the Editor has not had the heart to reduce it further.

Here is the book, then, at last. After so much pains from so many hands—including the good right hand of GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, which has seldom been better exercised,—he humbly hopes it may find favour with the public.

DOUGHTY STREET,

February, 1838.

MASTER JOE'S UNEXPECTED VISIT TO THE PIT. (See p. 11.)

MEMOIRS OF JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

CHAPTER I.

His Grandfather and Father.—His Birth and first appearance at Drury Lane Theatre, and at Sadlers Wells.—His Father's severity.—Miss Farren.—The Earl of Derby and the Wig.—The Fortune-box and Charity's reward.—His Father's pretended death, and the behaviour of himself and his brother thereupon.

THE paternal grandfather of Joseph Grimaldi was well known, both to the French and Italian public, as an eminent dancer, possessing a most extraordinary degree of strength and agility,—qualities which, being brought into full play by the constant exercise of his frame in his professional duties, acquired for him the distinguishing appellation of "Iron Legs." Dibdin, in his History of the Stage, relates several anecdotes of his prowess in these respects, many of which are current elsewhere, though the authority on which they rest would appear from his grandson's testimony to be somewhat doubtful; the best known of these, however, is perfectly true. Jumping extremely high one night in some performance on the stage, possibly in a fit of enthusiasm occasioned by the august presence of the Turkish Ambassador, who, with his suite, occupied the stage-box, he actually broke one of the chandeliers which in those times hung above the stage doors; and one of the glass drops was struck with some violence against the eye or countenance of the Turkish Ambassador aforesaid. The dignity of this great personage being much affronted, a formal complaint was made to the Court of France, who gravely commanded "Iron Legs" to apologise, which "Iron Legs" did in due form, to the great amusement of himself, and the court, and the public, and, in short, of everybody else but the exalted gentleman whose person had been grievously outraged. The mighty affair terminated in the appearance of a squib, which has been thus translated:—

"Hail, Iron Legs! immortal pair,
Agile, firm knit, and peerless,
That skim the earth, or vault in air,
Aspiring high and fearless.
Glory of Paris! outdoing compeers,
Brave pair! may nothing hurt ye;
Scatter at will our chandeliers,
And tweak the nose of Turkey.
And should a too presumptuous foe
But dare these shores to land on,
His well-kicked men shall quickly know
We've Iron Legs to stand on."

This circumstance occurred on the French stage. The first Grimaldi who appeared in England was the father of the subject of these memoirs, and the son of "Iron Legs," who, nolding the appointment of Dentist to Queen Charlotte, came to England in that capacity in 1760: he was a native of Genoa, and long before his arrival in this country had attained considerable distinction in his profession. We have not many instances of the union of the two professions of dentist and dancing-master; but Grimaldi, possessing a taste for both pursuits, and a much higher relish for the latter than the former, obtained leave to resign his situation about the Queen, soon after his arrival in this country, and commenced giving lessons in dancing and fencing, occasionally giving his pupils a taste of his quality in his old capacity. In those days of minuets and cotillions, private dancing was a much more laborious and serious affair than it is at present; and the younger branches of the nobility and gentry kept Mr. Grimaldi in pretty constant occupation. In many scattered notices of OUR Grimaldi's life, it has been stated that the father lost his situation at court in consequence of the rudeness of his behaviour, and some disrespect which he had shown the King; an accusation which his son always took very much to heart, and which the continual patronage of the King and Queen, bestowed upon him publicly, on all possible occasions, sufficiently proves to be unfounded.

His new career being highly successful, Mr. Grimaldi was appointed ballet-master of old Drury Lane Theatre and Sadlers Wells, with which he coupled the situation of primo buffo; in this double capacity he became a very great favourite with the public, and their majesties, who were nearly every week accustomed to command some pantomime of which "Grimaldi" was the hero. He bore the reputation of being a very honest man, and a very charitable one, never turning a deaf ear to the entreaties of the distressed, but always willing, by every means in his power, to relieve the numerous reduced and wretched persons who applied to him for assistance. It may be added—and his son always mentioned it with just pride—that he was never known to be inebriated: a rather scarce virtue among players of later times, and one which men of far higher rank in their profession would do well to profit by.

He appears to have been a very singular and eccentric man. It would be difficult to account for the little traits of his character, which are developed in the earlier pages of this book, unless this circumstance were borne in mind. He purchased a small quantity of ground at Lambeth once, part of which was laid out as a garden; he entered into possession of it in the very depth of a most inclement winter, but he was so impatient to ascertain how this garden would look in full bloom, that, finding it quite impossible to wait till the coming of spring and summer gradually developed its beauties, he had it at once decorated with an immense quantity of artificial flowers, and the branches of all the trees bent beneath the weight of the most luxuriant foliage, and the most abundant crops of fruit, all, it is needless to say, artificial also.

A singular trait in this individual's character, was a vague and profound dread of the 14th day of the month. At its approach he was always nervous, disquieted, and anxious: directly it had passed he was another man again, and invariably exclaimed, in his broken English, "Ah! Now I am safe for anoder month." If this circumstance were unaccompanied by any singular coincidence it would be scarcely worth mentioning; but it is remarkable that he actually died on the 14th day of March, and that he was born, christened, and married on the 14th of the month.

There are other anecdotes of the same kind told of Henri Quatre, and others; this one is undoubtedly true, and it may be added to the list of coincidences or presentiments, or by whatever name the reader pleases to call them, as a veracious and well-authenticated instance.

These are not the only odd characteristics of the man.

He was a most morbidly sensitive and melancholy being, and entertained a horror of death almost indescribable. He was in the habit of wandering about churchyards and burying places, for hours together, and would speculate on the diseases of which the persons whose remains occupied the graves he walked among, had died; figure their death-beds, and wonder how many of them had been buried alive in a fit or a trance: a possibility which he shuddered to think of, and which haunted him both through life and at its close. Such an effect had this fear upon his mind, that he left express directions in his will that, before his coffin should be fastened down, his head should be severed from his body, and the operation was actually performed in the presence of several persons.

It is a curious circumstance, that death, which always filled his mind with the most gloomy and horrible reflections, and which in his unoccupied moments can hardly be said to have been ever absent from his thoughts, should have been chosen by him as the subject of one of his most popular scenes in the pantomimes of the time. Among many others of the same nature, he invented the well-known skeleton scene for the clown, which was very popular in those days, and is still occasionally represented. Whether it be true, that the hypochondriac is most prone to laugh at the things which most annoy and terrify him in private, as a man who believes in the appearance of spirits upon earth is always the foremost to express his unbelief; or whether these gloomy ideas haunted the unfortunate man's mind so much, that even his merriment assumed a ghastly hue, and his comicality sought for grotesque objects in the grave and the charnel-house, the fact is equally remarkable.

This was the same man who, in the time of Lord George Gordon's riots, when people, for the purpose of protecting their houses from the fury of the mob, inscribed upon their doors the words "No Popery,"—actually, with the view of keeping in the right with all parties, and preventing the possibility of offending any by his form of worship, wrote up "No Religion at all;" which announcement appeared in large characters in front of his house, in Little Russell Street. The idea was perfectly successful; but whether from the humour of the description, or because the rioters did not happen to go down that particular street, we are unable to determine.

On the 18th of December 1779, the year in which Garrick died, Joseph Grimaldi, "Old Joe," was born, in Stanhope Street, Clare Market; a part of the town then, as now, much frequented by theatrical people, in consequence of its vicinity to the Theatres. At the period of his birth his eccentric father was more than seventy years old, and twenty-five months afterwards another son was born to him,—Joseph's only brother.

The child did not remain very long in a state of helpless and unprofitable infancy, for at the age of one year and eleven months he was brought out by his father on the boards of Old Drury, where he made his first bow and his first tumble. The piece in which his precocious powers were displayed was the well-known pantomime of Robinson Crusoe, in which the father sustained the part of the Shipwrecked Mariner, and the son performed that of the Little Clown. The child's success was complete; he was instantly placed on the establishment, accorded a magnificent weekly salary of fifteen shillings, and every succeeding year was brought forward in some new and prominent part. He became a favourite behind the curtain as well as before it, being henceforth distinguished in the green-room as "Clever little Joe;" and Joe he was called to the last day of his life.

In 1782, he first appeared at Sadlers Wells, in the arduous character of a monkey; and here he was fortunate enough to excite as much approbation as he had previously elicited in the part of Clown at Drury Lane. He immediately became a member of the regular company at this theatre, as he had done at the other; and here he remained, (one season only excepted) until the termination of his professional life, forty-nine years afterwards.

Now that he had made, or rather that his father had made for him, two engagements, by which he was bound to appear at two theatres on the same evening, and at very nearly the same time, his labours began in earnest. They would have been arduous for a man, much more so for a child; and it will be obvious, that if at any one portion of his life his gains were very great, the actual toil both of mind and body by which they were purchased, was at least equally so. The stage-stricken young gentlemen who hang about Sadlers Wells, and Astley's, and the Surrey, and private theatres of all kinds, and who long to embrace the theatrical profession because it is "so easy," little dream of all the anxieties, and hardships, and privations, and sorrows, which make the sum of most actors' lives.

We have already remarked that the father of Grimaldi was an eccentric man; he appears to have been peculiarly eccentric, and rather unpleasantly so, in the correction of his son. The child being bred up to play all kinds of fantastic tricks, was as much a clown, a monkey, or anything else that was droll and ridiculous, off the stage, as on it; and being incited thereto by the occupants of the green-room, used to skip and tumble about as much for their diversion as that of the public. All this was carefully concealed from the father, who, whenever he did happen to observe any of the child's pranks, always administered the same punishment—a sound thrashing; terminating in his being lifted up by the hair of his head, and stuck in the corner, whence his father, with a severe countenance and awful voice, would tell him "to venture to move at his peril."

Venture to move however he did, for no sooner would the father disappear, than all the cries and tears of the boy would disappear too; and with many of those winks and grins, which afterwards became so popular, he would recommence his pantomime with greater vigour than ever; indeed nothing could ever stop him but the cry of "Joe! Joe! here's your father!" upon which the boy would dart back into the old corner, and begin crying again as if he had never left off.

This became quite a regular amusement in course of time, and whether the father was coming or not, the caution used to be given for the mere pleasure of seeing "Joe" run back to his corner; this "Joe" very soon discovered, and, often confounding the warning with the joke, received more severe beatings than before, from him whom he very properly describes in his manuscript as his "severe, but excellent parent." On one of these occasions, when he was dressed for his favourite part of the little clown in Robinson Crusoe, with his face painted in exact imitation of his father's, which appears to have been part of the fun of the scene, the old gentleman brought him into the green-room, and, placing him in his usual solitary corner, gave him strict directions not to stir an inch, on pain of being thrashed, and left him.

The Earl of Derby, who was at that time in the constant habit of frequenting the green-room, happened to walk in at the moment, and seeing a lonesome-looking little boy dressed and painted after a manner very inconsistent with his solitary air, good-naturedly called him towards him.

"Hollo! here, my boy, come here!" said the Earl.

Joe made a wonderful and astonishing face, but remained where he was. The Earl laughed heartily, and looked round for an explanation.

"He dare not move!" exclaimed Miss Farren, to whom his lordship was then much attached, and whom he afterwards married, "his father will beat him if he does."

"Indeed," said his lordship. At which Joe, by way of confirmation, made another face more extraordinary than his former contortions.

"I think," said his lordship, laughing again, "the boy is not quite so much afraid of his father as you suppose. Come here, sir!"

With this, he held up half-a-crown, and the child, perfectly well knowing the value of money, darted from his corner, seized it with pantomimic suddenness, and was darting back again, when the Earl caught him by the arm.

"Here, Joe!" said the Earl, "take off your wig and throw it in the fire, and here's another half-crown for you."

No sooner said than done. Off came the wig,—into the fire it went; a roar of laughter arose; the child capered about with a half-crown in each hand; the Earl, alarmed for the consequences to the boy, busied himself to extricate the wig with the tongs and poker; and the father, in full dress for the Shipwrecked Mariner, rushed into the room at the same moment. It was lucky for "Little Joe" that Lord Derby promptly and humanely interfered, or it is exceedingly probable that his father would have prevented any chance of *his* being buried alive at all events, by killing him outright.

As it was, the matter could not be compromised without his receiving a smart beating, which made him cry very bitterly; and the tears running down his face, which was painted "an inch thick," came to the "com-

plexion at last," in parts, and made him look as much like a little clown as like a little human being, to neither of which characters he bore the most distant resemblance. He was "called" almost immediately afterwards, and the father, being in a violent rage, had not noticed the circumstance until the little object came on the stage, when a general roar of laughter directed his attention to his grotesque countenance. Becoming more violent than before, he fell upon him at once, and beat him severely, and the child roared vociferously. This was all taken by the audience as a most capital joke; shouts of laughter and peals of applause shook the house; and the newspapers next morning declared, that it was perfectly wonderful to see a mere child perform so naturally, and highly creditable to his father's talents as a teacher!

This is no bad illustration of some of the miseries of a poor actor's life. The jest on the lip and the tear in the eye, the merriment on the mouth and the aching of the heart, have called down the same shouts of laughter and peals of applause a hundred times. Characters in a state of starvation are almost invariably laughed at upon the stage;—the audience have had their dinner.

The bitterest portion of the boy's punishment, was the being deprived of the five shillings, which the excellent parent put into his own pocket, possibly because he received the child's salary also, and in order that everything might be, as Goldsmith's Bear-leader has it, "in a concatenation accordingly." The Earl gave him half-a-crown every time he saw him afterwards though, and the child had good cause for regret when his lordship married Miss Farren, and left the green-room.

At Sadlers Wells he became a favourite almost as speedily as at Drury Lane. King the comedian, who was principal proprietor of the former theatre and acting manager of the latter, took a great deal of notice of him, and occasionally gave the child a guinea to buy a rocking-horse or a cart, or some toy that struck his fancy. During the run of the first piece in which he played at Sadlers Wells, he produced his first serious effect, which, but for the good fortune which seems to have attended him in such cases, might have prevented his subsequent appearance on any stage. He played a monkey, and had to accompany the clown (his father) throughout the piece. In one of the scenes, the clown used to lead him on by a chain attached to his waist, and with this chain he would swing him round and round, at arm's length, with the utmost velocity. One evening, when this feat was in the act of performance, the chain broke, and he was hurled a considerable distance into the pit, fortunately without sustaining the slightest injury; for he was flung by a miracle into the very arms of an old gentleman who was sitting gazing at the stage with intense interest.

Among the many persons who in this early stage of his career behaved with great kindness to him, were, the famous rope-dancers, Mr. and Mrs. Ridge, then called Le petit Diable, and La belle Espagnole; who often gave him a guinea to buy some childish luxury, which his father invariably took away and deposited in a box, with his name written outside, which he would lock very carefully, and then, giving the boy the key, say, "Mind, Joe, ven I die, dat is your vortune." Eventually he lost both the box and the fortune, as will hereafter appear.

As he had now nearly four months vacant out of every twelve, the run of the Christmas pantomime at Drury Lane seldom exceeding a month, and Sadlers Wells not opening until Easter, he was sent for that period of the year to a boarding-school at Putney, kept by a Mr. Ford, of whose kindness and goodness of heart to him on a later occasion of his life, he spoke, when an old man, with the deepest gratitude. He fell in here with many schoolfellows who afterwards became connected one way or another with dramatic pursuits, among whom was Mr. Henry Harris, of Covent Garden Theatre. We do not find that any of these school-fellows afterwards became pantomime actors; but recollecting the humour and vivacity of the boy, the wonder to us is, that they were not all clowns when they grew up.

In the Christmas of 1782 he appeared in his second character at Drury Lane, called "Harlequin Junior, or the Magic Cestus," in which he represented a demon, sent by some opposing magician to counteract the power of the harlequin. In this, as in his preceding part, he was fortunate enough to meet with great applause; and from this period his reputation was made, although it naturally increased with his years, strength, and improvement.

In the following Easter he repeated the monkey at Sadlers Wells without the pit effect. As the piece was withdrawn at the end of a month, and he had nothing to do for the remainder of the season, he again repaired to Putney.

In Christmas 1783 he once more appeared at Drury Lane, in a pantomime called "Hurly Burley." In this piece he had to represent, not only the old part of the monkey, but that of a cat besides; and in sustaining the latter character he met with an accident, his speedy recovery from which would almost induce one to believe that he had so completely identified himself with the character as to have eight additional chances for his life. The dress he wore was so clumsily contrived, that when it was sewn upon him he could not see before him; consequently, as he was running about the stage, he fell down a trap-door, which had been left open to represent a well, and tumbled a distance of forty feet, thereby breaking his collar-bone, and inflicting several contusions upon his body. He was immediately conveyed home, and placed under the care of a surgeon, but he did not recover soon enough to appear any more that season at Drury Lane, although at Easter he performed at Sadlers Wells as usual.

In the summer of this year he used to be allowed, as a mark of high and special favour, to spend every alternate Sunday at the house of his mother's father, "who," says Grimaldi himself, "resided in Newton Street, Holborn, and was a carcase butcher, doing a prodigious business; besides which, he kept the Bloomsbury slaughter-house, and, at the time of his death, had done so for more than sixty years." With this grandfather "Joe" was a great favourite; and as he was very much indulged and petted when he went to see him, he used to look forward to every visit with great anxiety. His father, upon his part, was most anxious that he should support the credit of the family upon these occasions, and, after great deliberation, and much consultation with tailors, the "little clown" was attired for one of these Sunday excursions in the following style. On his back he wore a green coat, embroidered with almost as many artificial flowers as his father had put in the garden at Lambeth; beneath this there shone a satin waistcoat of dazzling whiteness; and beneath that again were a pair of green cloth breeches (the word existed in those days) richly embroidered. His legs were fitted into white silk stockings, and his feet into shoes with brilliant paste buckles, of which he also wore another resplendent pair at his knees: he had a laced shirt, cravat, and ruffles; a cocked-hat upon his head; a small watch set with diamonds—theatrical, we suppose—in his fob; and a little cane in his hand, which he switched to and fro as our clowns may do now.

Being thus thoroughly equipped for starting, he was taken in for his father's inspection: the old gentleman was pleased to signify his entire approbation with his appearance, and, after kissing him in the moment of his gratification, demanded the key of the "fortune-box." The key being got with some difficulty out of one of the pockets of the green smalls, the bottom of which might be somewhere near the buckles, the old gentleman took a guinea out of the box, and, putting it into the boy's pocket, said, "Dere now, you are a gentleman, and something more,—you have got a guinea in your pocket." The box having been carefully locked, and the key returned to the owner of the "fortune," off he started, receiving strict injunctions to be home by eight o'clock. The father would not allow anybody to attend him, on the ground that he was a gentleman, and consequently perfectly able to take care of himself; so away he went, to walk all the way from Little Russell Street, Drury Lane, to Newton Street, Holborn.

The child's appearance in the street excited considerable curiosity, as the appearance of any other child, alone, in such a costume, might very probably have done; but he was a public character besides, and the astonishment was proportionate. "Hollo!" cried one boy, "here's 'Little Joe!'" "Get along," said another, "it's the monkey." A third thought it was the "bear dressed for a dance;" and the fourth suggested "it might be the cat going out to a party," while the more sedate passengers could not help laughing heartily, and saying how ridiculous it was to trust such a child in the streets alone. However, he walked on, with various singular grimaces, until he stopped to look at a female of miserable appearance, who was reclining on the pavement, and whose diseased and destitute aspect had already collected a crowd. The boy stopped, like others, and hearing her tale of distress, became so touched, that he thrust his hand into his pocket, and having at last found the bottom of it, pulled out his

guinea, which was the only coin he had, and slipped it into her hand; then away he walked again, with a greater air than before.

The sight of the embroidered coat and breeches and the paste buckles, and the satin waistcoat and cocked-hat, had astonished the crowd not a little in the outset; but directly it was understood that the small owner of these articles had given the woman a guinea, a great number of people collected around him, and began shouting and staring by turns most earnestly. The boy, not at all abashed, headed the crowd, and walked on very deliberately, with a train a street or two long behind him, until he fortunately encountered a friend of his father's, who no sooner saw the concourse that attended him, than he took him in his arms and carried him, despite a few kicks and struggles, in all his brilliant attire, to his grandfather's house, where he spent the day very much to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

When he got safely home at night, the father referred to his watch, and finding that he had returned home punctual to the appointed time, kissed him, extolled him for paying such strict attention to his instructions, examined his dress, discovered satisfactorily that no injury had been done to his clothes, and concluded by asking for the key of the "fortune-box" and the guinea. The boy, at first, quite forgot the morning adventure; but after rummaging all his pockets for the guinea, and not finding it, he recollected what had occurred, and, falling upon the knees of the knee-smalls, confessed it all, and implored forgiveness.

The father was puzzled; he was always giving away money in charity himself, and he could scarcely reprimand the child for doing the same. He looked at him for some seconds with a perplexed countenance, and then, contenting himself with simply saying, "I'll beat you," sent him to bed.

Among the eccentricities of the old gentleman, one—certainly not his most amiable one—was, that whatever he promised he performed; and that when, as in this case, he promised to thrash the boy, he would very coolly let the matter stand over for months, but never forgot it in the end. This was ingenious, inasmuch as it doubled, or trebled, or quadrupled the punishment, giving the unhappy little victim all the additional pain of anticipating it for a long time, with the certainty of enduring it in the end. Four or five months after this occurrence, and when the child had not given his father any new cause of offence, he suddenly called him to him one day, and communicated the intelligence that he was going to beat him forthwith. Hereupon the boy began to cry most piteously, and faltered forth the inquiry, "Oh! father, what for?"—"Remember the guinea!" said the father. And he gave him a caning which he remembered to the last day of his life.

The family consisted at this time of the father, mother, Joe, his only brother John Baptist, three or four female servants, and a man of colour who acted as footman, and was dignified with the appellation of "Black Sam."

The father was extremely hospitable, and fond of company: he rarely dined alone, and on certain gala days, of which Christmas Eve was one, had a very large party, upon which occasions his really splendid service of plate, together with the various costly articles of *bijouterie*, was laid out for the admiration of the guests. Upon one Christmas Eve, when the dining-parlour was decorated and prepared with all due gorgeousness and splendour, the two boys, accompanied by Black Sam, stole into it, and began to pass various encomiums on its beautiful appearance.

"Ah!" said Sam in reply to some remark of the brothers, "and when old Massa die, all dese fine things vill be yours."

Both the boys were much struck with this remark, and especially John, the younger, who, being extremely young, probably thought much less about death than his father, and accordingly exclaimed without the least reserve or delicacy, that he should be exceedingly glad if all these fine things were his.

Nothing more was said upon the subject. Black Sam went to his work, the boys commenced a game of play, and nobody thought any more of the matter except the father himself, who, passing the door of the room at the moment the remarks were made, distinctly heard them. He pondered over the matter for some days, and at length, with the view of ascertaining the dispositions of his two sons, formed a singular resolution, still connected with the topic ever upwards in his mind, and determined to feign himself dead. He caused himself to be laid out in the drawing-room, covered with a sheet, and had the room darkened, the windows closed, and all the usual ceremonies which accompanied death, performed. All this being done, and the servants duly instructed, the two boys were cautiously informed that their father had died suddenly, and were at once hurried into the room where he lay, in order that he might hear them give vent to their real feelings.*

When Joe was brought into the dark room on so short a notice, his sensations were rather complicated, but they speedily resolved themselves into a firm persuasion that his father was not dead. A variety of causes led him to this conclusion, among which the most prominent were, his having very recently seen his father in the best health; and besides several half-suppressed winks and blinks from Black Sam, his observing, by looking closely at the sheet, that his deceased parent still breathed. With very little hesitation the boy perceived what line of conduct he ought to adopt, and at once bursting into a roar of the most distracted grief, flung himself upon the floor, and rolled about in a seeming transport of anguish.

John, not having seen so much of public life as his brother, was not so cunning, and perceiving in his father's death nothing but a relief from flogging and books (for both of which he had a great dislike), and the immediate possession of all the plate in the dining-room, skipped about the room, indulging in various snatches of song, and snapping his fingers, declared that he was glad to hear it.

"O! you cruel boy," said Joe, in a passion of tears, "hadn't you any love for your dear father? O, what would I give to see him alive again!"

"O! never mind," replied the brother, "don't be such a fool as to cry; we can have the cuckoo clock all to ourselves now."

This was more than the deceased could bear. He jumped from the bier, opened the shutters, threw off the sheet, and attacked his younger son most unmercifully; while Joe, not knowing what might be his own fate, ran and hid himself in the coal-cellar, where he was discovered some four hours afterwards, by Black Sam, fast asleep, who carried him to his father, who had been anxiously in search of him, and by whom he was received with every demonstration of affection, as the son who truly and sincerely loved him.

From this period, up to the year 1788, he continued regularly employed upon the same salaries as he had originally received both at Drury Lane and Sadlers Wells.

CHAPTER II.

1788 to 1794.

The Father's real Death.—His Will, and failure of the Executor.—Generous conduct of Grimaldi's Schoolmaster, and of Mr. Wroughton the Comedian.—Kindness of Sheridan.—Grimaldi's industry and amusements.—Fly catching.—Expedition in search of the "Dartford Blues."—Mrs. Jordan.—Adventure on Clapham Common; the piece of Tin.—His first love and its consequences.

It has been stated in several publications that Grimaldi's father died in 1787. It would appear from several passages in the memoranda dictated by his son, that he expired on the 14th of March, 1788, of dropsy, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, and that he was interred in the burial-ground attached to Exmouth-street chapel; a spot of ground in which, if it bore any resemblance at that time to its present condition, he could have had very little room to walk about and meditate when alive. He left a will, by which he directed all his effects and jewels to be sold by public auction, and the proceeds to be added to his funded property, which exceeded 15,000*l.*; the whole of the gross amount, he directed should be divided equally between the two brothers as they respectively attained their majority. Mr. King, to whom allusion has already been named, was appointed co-executor with a Mr. Joseph Hopwood, a lace-manufacturer in Long Acre, at that time supposed to possess not only an excellent business, but independent property to a considerable amount besides. Shortly after they entered upon their office, in consequence of Mr. King declining to act, the whole of the estate fell to the manage-

* A similar scene has been frequently represented on the stage. It is probable that the father derived the notion from some play in which he had acted, or which he had seen performed.

ment of Mr. Hopwood, who, employing the whole of the brothers' capital in his trade, became a bankrupt within a year, fled from England, and was never heard of afterwards. By this unfortunate and unforeseen event, the brothers lost the whole of their fortune, and were thrown upon their own resources and exertions for the means of subsistence.

It is very creditable to all parties, and while it speaks highly for the kind feeling of the friends of the widow and her two sons, bears high testimony to their conduct and behaviour, that no sooner was the failure of the executor known than offers of assistance were heaped upon them from all quarters. Mr. Ford, the Putney schoolmaster, offered at once to receive Joseph into his school, and to adopt him as his own son; this offer being declined by his mother, Mr. Sheridan, who was then proprietor of Drury Lane theatre, raised the boy's salary, unasked, to one pound per week, and permitted his mother, who was and had been from her infancy a dancer at that establishment, to accept a similar engagement at Sadlers Wells, which was, in fact, equivalent to a double salary, both theatres being open together for a considerable period of the year.

At Sadlers Wells, where Joseph appeared as usual in 1788, shortly after his father's death, they were not so liberal, nor was the aspect of things so pleasing, his salary of fifteen shillings a-week being very unceremoniously cut down to three, and his mother being politely informed, upon her remonstrating, that if the alteration did not suit her, he was at perfect liberty to transfer his valuable services to any other house. Small as the pittance was, they could not afford to refuse it; and at that salary he remained at Sadlers Wells for three years, occasionally superintending the property-room, sometimes assisting in the carpenter's, and sometimes in the painter's, and, in fact, lending a hand wherever it was most needed.

When the defalcation of the executor took place, the family were compelled to give up their comfortable establishment, and to seek for lodgings of an inferior description. His mother knowing a Mr. and Mrs. Bailey, who then resided in Great Wild Street, and who let lodgings, applied to them, and there they lived, in three rooms on the first floor, for several years. The brother could not be prevailed upon to accept any regular engagement, for he thought and dreamt of nothing but going to sea, and evinced the utmost detestation of the stage. Sometimes, when boys were wanted in the play at Drury Lane, he was sent for, and attended, for which he received a shilling per night; but so great was his unwillingness and evident dissatisfaction on such occasions, that Mr. Wroughton, the comedian, who, by purchasing the property of Mr. King, became about this period proprietor of Sadlers Wells, stepped forward in the boy's behalf, and obtained for him a situation on board an East-Indiaman which then lay in the river, and was about to sail almost immediately.

John was delighted when the prospect of realizing his ardent wishes opened upon him so suddenly; but his raptures were diminished by the discovery that an outfit was indispensable, and that it would cost upwards of fifty pounds: a sum which, it is scarcely necessary to say, his friends, in their reduced position, could not command. But the same kind-hearted gentleman removed this obstacle, and with a generosity and readiness which enhanced the value of the gift an hundred fold, advanced, without security or obligation, the whole sum required, merely saying, "Mind, John, when you come to be a captain you must pay it me back again."

There is no difficulty in providing the necessaries for a voyage to any part of the world when you have provided the first and most important—money. In two days John took his leave of his mother and brother, and with his outfit, or kit, was safely deposited on board the vessel in which a berth had been procured for him; but the boy, who was of a rash, hasty, and inconsiderate temper, finding, on going on board, that a delay of ten days would take place before the ship sailed, and that a king's ship, which lay near her, was just then preparing to drop down to Gravesend with the tide, actually swam from his own ship to the other, entered himself as a seaman or cabin-boy on board the latter in some feigned name,—what it was his friends never heard,—and so sailed immediately, leaving every article of his outfit, down to the commonest necessary of wearing apparel, on board the East-Indiaman, on the books of which he had been entered through the kindness of Mr. Wroughton. He disappeared in 1789, and he was not heard of, or from, or seen, for fourteen years afterwards.

At this period of his life Joseph was far from idle: he had to walk from Drury Lane to Sadlers Wells every morning to attend rehearsals, which then began at ten o'clock; to be back at Drury Lane to dinner by two, or go without it; to be back again at Sadlers Wells in the evening, in time for the commencement of the performances at six o'clock; to go through uninterrupted labour from that time until eleven o'clock, or later; and then to walk home again, repeatedly, after having changed his dress twenty times in the course of the night.

For some years his life went on quietly enough, possessing very little of anecdote or interest beyond his steady and certain rise in his profession and in the estimation of the public, which, although very important to him from the money he afterwards gained by it, and to the public from the amusement which his peculiar excellence yielded them for so many years, offers no material for our present purpose. This gradual progress in the good opinion of the town exercised a material influence on his receipts; for, in 1794, his salary at Drury Lane was trebled, while his salary at Sadlers Wells had risen from three shillings per week to four pounds. He lodged in Great Wild Street with his mother all this time: their landlord had died, and the widow's daughter, from accompanying Mrs. Grimaldi to Sadlers Wells theatre, had formed an acquaintance with and married Mr. Robert Fairbrother of that establishment and Drury Lane, upon which Mrs. Bailey, the widow, took Mr. Fairbrother into partnership as a furrier, in which pursuit, by industry and perseverance, he became eminently successful.

This circumstance would be scarcely worth mentioning, but that it shows the industry and perseverance of Grimaldi, and the ease with which, by the exercise of those qualities, a very young person may overcome all the disadvantages and temptations incidental to the most precarious walk of a most precarious pursuit, and become a useful and respectable member of society. He earned many a guinea from Mr. Fairbrother by working at his trade, and availing himself of his instruction in his leisure hours; and when he could do nothing in that way, he would go to Newton Street and assist his uncle and cousin, the carcase butchers, for nothing: such was his unconquerable antipathy to being idle. He does not inform us whether it required a practical knowledge of trade to display that skill and address with which, in his subsequent prosperity, he would diminish the joints of his customers as a baker, or increase the weight of their meat as a butcher, but we hope, for the credit of trade, that his morals in this respect were wholly imaginary.

These were his moments of occupation, but he contrived to find moments of amusement besides, which were devoted to the breeding of pigeons and collecting of insects, which latter amusement he pursued with such success as to form a cabinet containing no fewer than 4000 specimens of flies, "collected," he says, "at the expense of a great deal of time, a great deal of money, and a great deal of vast and actual labour,"—for all of which, no doubt, the entomologist will deem him sufficiently rewarded. He appears in old age to have entertained a peculiar relish for the recollection of these pursuits, and calls to mind a part of Surrey where there was a very famous fly, and a part of Kent where there was another famous fly; one of these was called the Camberwell Beauty, (which he adds was very ugly,) and another the Dartford Blue, by which Dartford Blue he seems to have set great store; and which were pursued and caught in manner following, in June 1794, when they regularly make their first appearance for the season.

Being engaged nightly at Sadlers Wells, he was obliged to wait till he had finished his business upon the stage; then he returned home, had supper, and shortly after midnight started off to walk to Dartford, fifteen miles from town. Here he arrived about five o'clock in the morning, and calling upon a friend of the name of Brooks, who lived in the neighbourhood, and who was already stirring, he rested, breakfasted, and sallied forth into the fields. His search was not very profitable however, for after some hours, he only succeeded in bagging or bottling one "Dartford Blue," with which he returned to his friend perfectly satisfied. At one o'clock he bade his friend good-bye, walked back to town, reached London by five, washed, took tea, and hurried to Sadlers Wells. No time was to be lost,—the fact of the appearance of the "Dartford Blues" having been thoroughly established,—in securing more specimens; so on the same night, directly the pantomime was over, and supper over too, off he walked down to Dartford again, found the friend up again, took a hasty breakfast again, and

resumed his search again. Meeting with better sport, and capturing no fewer than four dozen Dartford Blues, he hurried back to the friend's; set them—an important process, which consists in placing the insects in the position in which their natural beauty can be best displayed,—started off with the Dartford Blues in his pocket for London once more, reached home by four o'clock in the afternoon, washed, and took a hasty meal, and then went to the theatre for the evening's performance. As not half the necessary number of Blues had been taken, he had decided upon another visit to Dartford that same night, and was consequently much pleased to find that, from some unforeseen circumstance, the pantomime was to be played first. By this means he was enabled to leave London at nine o'clock, to reach Dartford at one, to find a bed and supper ready, to meet a kind reception from his friend, and finally to turn into bed, a little tired with the two days' exertions. The next day was Sunday, so that he could indulge himself without being obliged to return to town, and in the morning he caught more flies than he wanted; so the rest of the day was devoted to quiet sociality. He went to bed at ten o'clock, rose early next morning, walked comfortably to town, and at noon was perfect in his part at the rehearsal on the stage at Drury Lane theatre.

It is probable that by such means as these, united to temperance and sobriety, Grimaldi acquired many important bodily requisites for the perfection which he afterwards attained. But his love of entomology, or exercise, was not the only inducement in the case of the Dartford Blues; he had, he says, another strong motive, and this was, the having promised a little collection of insects to "one of the most charming women of her age," —the lamented Mrs. Jordan, at that time a member of the Drury Lane company.

Upon one occasion he had held under his arm, during a morning rehearsal, a box containing some specimens of flies. Mrs. Jordan was much interested to know what could possibly be in the box that Grimaldi carried about with him with so much care, and would not lose sight of for an instant; and in reply to her inquiry whether it contained anything pretty, he replied by exhibiting the flies.

He does not say whether these particular flies, which Mrs. Jordan admired, were Dartford Blues, or not; but he gives us to understand that his skill in preserving and arranging insects was really very great, that all this trouble and fatigue were undertaken in a spirit of respectful gallantry to the most winning person of her time, and that having requested permission previously, he presented two frames of insects to Mrs. Jordan, on the first day of the new season, and immediately after she had finished the rehearsal of Rosalind in "As you like it." That Mrs. Jordan was delighted, that he was at least equally so, that she took the frames away in her carriage, and warmed his heart by telling him that his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence considered the flies equal, if not superior to any of the kind he had ever seen.

His only other companion in these trips, besides his Dartford friend, was Robert Gomery, or "friend Bob," as he was called by his intimates, at that time an actor at Sadlers Wells, and for many years afterwards a public favourite at the various minor theatres of the metropolis; who is now, or was lately, enjoying a handsome independence at Bath. With this friend he had a little adventure, which it was his habit to relate with great glee.

One day he had been fly-hunting with his friend from early morning until night, thinking of nothing but flies, until at length their thoughts naturally turning to something more substantial, they halted for refreshment.

"Bob," said Grimaldi, "I am very hungry."

"So am I," said Bob.

"There is a public-house," said Grimaldi.

"It is *just* the very thing," observed the other.

It was a very neat public-house, and would have answered the purpose admirably, but Grimaldi having no money, and very much doubting whether his friend had either, did not respond to the sentiment quite so cordially as he might have done.

"We had better go in,"—said the friend, "it is getting late—*you* pay."

"No, no! you."

"I would in a minute," said his friend, "but I have not got any money."

Grimaldi thrust his hand into his right pocket with one of his queerest faces, then into his left, then into his coat pockets, then into his waistcoat, and finally took off his hat and looked into that; but there was no money anywhere.

They still walked on towards the public-house, meditating with rueful countenances, when Grimaldi spying something lying at the foot of a tree, picked it up, and suddenly exclaimed, with a variety of winks and nods, "Here's a sixpence."

The hungry friend's eyes brightened, but they quickly resumed their gloomy expression as he rejoined, "It's a piece of tin!"

Grimaldi winked again, rubbed the sixpence or the piece of tin very hard, and declared, putting it between his teeth by way of test, that it was as good a sixpence as he could wish to see.

"I don't think it," said the friend, shaking his head.

"I'll tell you what," said Grimaldi, "we'll go to the public-house, and ask the landlord whether it's a good one or not. They always know."

To this the friend assented, and they hurried on, disputing all the way whether it was really a sixpence or not; a discovery which could not be made at that time, when the currency was defaced and worn nearly plain, with the ease with which it could be made at present.

The publican, a fat jolly fellow, was standing at his door, talking to a friend, and the house looked so uncommonly comfortable, that Gomery whispered as they approached, that perhaps it might be best to have some bread and cheese first, and ask about the sixpence afterwards.

Grimaldi nodded his entire assent, and they went in and ordered some bread and cheese, and beer. Having taken the edge off their hunger, they tossed up a farthing, which Grimaldi happened to find in the corner of some theretofore undiscovered pocket, to determine who should present the "sixpence." The chance falling on himself, he walked up to the bar, and with a very lofty air, and laying the questionable metal down with a dignity quite his own, requested the landlord to take the bill out of that.

"Just right, sir," said the landlord, looking at the strange face that his customer assumed, and not at the sixpence.

"It's right, sir, is it?" asked Grimaldi, sternly.

"Quite," answered the landlord; "thank ye, gentlemen." And with this he slipped the,—whatever it was, —into his pocket.

Gomery looked at Grimaldi, and Grimaldi, with a look and air which baffle all description, walked out of the house followed by his friend.

"I never knew anything so lucky," he said, as they walked home to supper,—"it was quite a Providence that sixpence."

"A piece of tin, you mean," said Gomery.

Which of the two it was, is uncertain, but Grimaldi often patronized the same house afterwards, and as he never heard anything more about the matter, he felt quite convinced that it was a real good sixpence.

In the early part of the year 1794, they quitted their lodgings in Great Wild Street, and took a six-roomed house, in Penton Place, Pentonville, with a garden attached; a part of this they let off to a Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, who then belonged to Sadlers Wells, and in this manner they lived for three years, during the whole of which period his salaries steadily rose in amount, and he began to consider himself quite independent.

At Easter, Sadlers Wells opened as usual, and making a great hit in a new part, his fame rapidly increased. At this time he found a new acquaintance which exercised a material influence upon his comfort and happiness for many years. The intimacy commenced thus:—

When there was a rehearsal at Sadlers Wells, his mother, who was engaged there as well as himself, was in the habit of remaining at the theatre all day, taking her meals in her dressing-room, and occupying herself with needle-work. This she had done to avoid the long walk in the middle of the day from Sadlers Wells to Great Wild Street, and back again almost directly. It became a habit, and when they had removed to Penton Place, and consequently were so much nearer the theatre that it was no longer necessary, it still continued. Mr. Hughes, who had now become principal proprietor of the theatre, and who lived in the house attached to it, had several children, the eldest of whom was Miss Maria Hughes, a young lady of considerable accomplishments, who had always been much attached to Grimaldi's mother, and who embraced every opportunity of being in her society. Knowing the hours at which she was in the dressing-room during the day, Miss Hughes was in the habit of taking her work, and sitting with her from three

or four o'clock until six, when the other female performers beginning to arrive, she retired. Grimaldi was generally at the theatre between four and five, always taking tea with his mother at the last-named hour, and sitting with her until the arrival of the ladies broke up the little party. In this way an intimacy arose between Miss Hughes and himself, which ultimately ripened into feelings of a warmer nature.

The day after he made his great hit in the new piece, he went as usual to tea in the dressing-room, where Mrs. Lewis, their lodger, who was the wardrobe-keeper of the theatre, happening to be present, overwhelmed him with compliments on his great success. Miss Hughes was there too, but she said nothing for a long time, and Grimaldi, who would rather have heard her speak for a minute than Mrs. Lewis for an hour, listened as patiently as he could to the encomiums which the good woman lavished upon him. At length she stopped, as the best talkers must now and then, to take breath, and then Miss Hughes, looking up said, with some hesitation, that she thought Mr. Grimaldi had played the part uncommonly well; so well that she was certain there was no one who could have done it at all like him.

Now, before he went into the room, he had turned the matter over in his mind, and had come to the conclusion, that if Miss Hughes praised his acting, he would reply with some neatly-turned compliment to her, which might afford some hint of the state of his feelings; and with this view he had considered of a good many very smart ones, but somehow or other, the young lady no sooner opened her lips in speech, than Grimaldi opened his in admiration, and out flew all the compliments in empty breath, without producing the slightest sound. He turned very red, looked very funny, and felt very foolish. At length he made an awkward bow, and turned to leave the room.

It was six o'clock, and the lady performers just then came in. As he was always somewhat of a favourite among them, a few of the more volatile and giddy,—for there are a few such, in almost all companies, theatrical or otherwise,—began first to praise his acting, and then to rally him upon another subject.

"Now Joe has become such a favourite," said one, "he ought to look out for a sweetheart."

Here Joe just glanced at Miss Hughes and turned a deeper red than ever.

"Certainly he ought," said another. "Will any of us do, Joe?"

Upon this Joe exhibited fresh symptoms of being uncomfortable, which were hailed with a general burst of laughter.

"I'll tell you what, ladies," said Mrs. Lewis, "if I'm not greatly mistaken, Joe has got a sweetheart already."

Another lady said, that to her certain knowledge he had two, and another that he had three, and so on: he standing among them the whole time, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, vexed to death to think that Miss Hughes should hear these libels, and frightened out of his wits lest she should be disposed to believe them.

At length he made his escape, and being induced by the conversation which had just passed, to ponder upon the matter, he was soon led to the conclusion that the fair daughter of Mr. Hughes had made an impression on his heart, and that unless he could marry her he would marry nobody, and must be for ever miserable, with other like deductions which young men are in the habit of making from similar premises. The discovery was not unattended by many misgivings. The great difference of station then existing between them appeared to interpose an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of their marriage; and, further, he had no reason to suppose that the young lady entertained for him any other sentiments than those with which she might be naturally disposed to regard the son of a friend whom she had known so long. These considerations rendered him as unhappy as the most passionate lover could desire to be; he ate little, drank little, slept less, lost his spirits; and, in short, exhibited a great variety of symptoms sufficiently dangerous in any case, but particularly so in one where the patient had mainly to depend upon the preservation of his powers of fun and comicality, for a distant chance of the fulfilment of his hopes.

CHAPTER III.

1794 to 1797.

Grimaldi falls in Love.—His success—He meets with an accident which brings the Reader acquainted with that invaluable specific "Grimaldi's Embrocation."—He rises gradually in his Profession.—The Pentonville Gang of Burglars.

It is scarcely to be supposed that such a sudden and complete change in the merry genius of the theatre could escape the observation of those around him, far less of his mother, who, as he had been her constant and affectionate companion, observed him with anxious solicitude. Various hints and soundings, and indirect inquiries, were the consequence, but they were far from eliciting the truth; he was ill, fatigued by constant exertion in difficult parts, and that was all that his friends could gather from him.

There was another circumstance which puzzled the lady mother more than all. This was, that he never visited the dressing-room, whither he had been accustomed regularly to resort; and that he either took tea before he went to the theatre, or not at all. The truth was, that he was quite unable to endure the facetiousness of the ladies in the presence of Miss Hughes; the more so, because he fancied that his annoyance seemed to afford that young lady considerable amusement, and rather than find this the case, he determined to relinquish the pleasure of her society.

So matters stood for some weeks, when one night, having occasion during the performances to repair to the wardrobe for some articles of dress, he hastily entered, and instead of discovering his old friend Mrs. Lewis, found himself confronted and alone with Mr. Hughes's daughter.

In these cases, if the lady exhibit emotion the gentleman gains courage; but Miss Hughes exhibited no emotion, merely saying,

"Why, Joe, I have not seen you for a fortnight; where *have* you been hiding? How is it that I never see you at tea now?"

The tone of kindness in which this was said, somewhat re-assured the lover, so he made an effort to speak, and got as far as, "I'm not well."

"Not well!" said the young lady. And she said it so kindly that all poor Joe's emotion returned; and being really ill and weak, and very sensitive withal, he made an effort or two to look cheerful, and burst into tears.

The young lady looked at him for a moment or two quite surprised, and then said, in a tone of earnest commiseration, "I see that you are not well, and that you are very much changed: what is the matter with you? Pray tell me."

At this inquiry the young man, who seems to have inherited all the sensitiveness of his father's character without its worst points, threw himself into a chair, and cried like a child; vainly endeavouring to stammer out a few words, which were wholly unintelligible. Miss Hughes gently endeavoured to soothe him, and at that moment, Mrs. Lewis, suddenly entering the room, surprised them in this very sentimental situation; upon which Grimaldi, thinking he must have made himself very ridiculous, jumped up and ran away.

Mrs. Lewis being older in years, and in such matters too, than either Miss Hughes or her devoted admirer, kept her own counsel, thought over what she had seen, and discreetly presented herself before Grimaldi next day when, after a sleepless night, he was sauntering moodily about the garden, aggravating all the doubts, and diminishing all the hopes, that involved themselves with the object nearest his heart.

"Dear me, Joe!" exclaimed the old lady, "how wretched you do look! Why, what is the matter?"

He tried an excuse or two, but reposing great trust in the sagacity and sincerity of his questioner, and sadly wanting a confidante, he first solemnly bound her to secrecy and then told his tale. Mrs. Lewis at once took upon herself the office of a go-between; undertook to sound Miss Hughes without delay; and counselled Grimaldi to prepare a letter containing a full statement of his feelings, which if the conversation between herself and Miss Hughes on that very evening were propitious, should be delivered on the following.

Accordingly, he devoted all his leisure time that day to the composition of various epistles, and the spoiling of many sheets of paper, with a view to setting down his feelings in the very best and appropriate terms he could possibly employ. One complete letter was finished at last, although even that was not half powerful enough;

and going to the theatre and carefully avoiding the old dressing-room, he went through his part with greater *éclat* than before. Having hastily changed his dress, he hurried to Mrs. Lewis's room, where that good lady at once detailed all the circumstances that had occurred since the morning, which she thought conclusive, but which the lover feared were not.

It seems that Mrs. Lewis had embraced the first opportunity of being left alone with Miss Hughes to return to the old subject of Joe's looking very ill; to which Miss Hughes replied that he certainly did, and said it, too, according to the matured opinion of Mrs Lewis, as if she had been longing to introduce the subject without exactly knowing how.

"What can be the matter with him?" said Miss Hughes.

"I have found it out, Miss," said Mrs. Lewis; "Joe is in love."

"In love!" said Miss Hughes.

"Over head and ears," replied Mrs. Lewis. "I never saw any poor dear young man in such a state."

"Who is the lady?" asked Miss Hughes, inspecting some object that lay near her with every appearance of unconcern.

"That's a secret," said Mrs. Lewis. "I know her name: she does not know he is in love with her yet, but I am going to give her a letter to-morrow night, telling her all about it."

"I should like to know her name," said Miss Hughes.

"Why," returned Mrs. Lewis, "you see, I promised Joe not to tell; but as you are so very anxious to know, I can let you into the secret without breaking my word: you shall see the direction of the letter."

Miss Hughes was quite delighted with the idea, and left the room, after making an appointment for the ensuing evening for that purpose.

Such was Mrs. Lewis's tale in brief; after hearing which, Grimaldi, who, not being so well acquainted with the subject, was not so sanguine, went home to bed, but not to sleep: his thoughts wavering between his friend's communication and the love-letter, of which he could not help thinking that he could still polish up a sentence or two with considerable advantage.

The next morning was one of great agitation, and when Mrs. Lewis posted off to the theatre with the important epistle in her pocket, the lover fell into such a tremor of anxiety and suspense, that he was quite unconscious how the day passed: he could stay away from the theatre no longer than five o'clock, at which time he hurried down to ascertain the fate of his letter.

"I have not been able to give it yet," said Mrs. Lewis softly; "but do you just go to the dressing-room; she is there: only look at her, and guess whether she cares for you or not."

He went, and saw Miss Hughes looking very pale, with traces of tears on her face. Six o'clock soon came, and the young lady, hurrying to the room of the confidante, eagerly inquired whether she had got Joe's letter.

"I have," said Mrs. Lewis, looking very sly.

"Oh! pray let me see it," said Miss Hughes; "I am so anxious to know who the lady is, and so desirous that Joe should be happy."

"Why, upon my word," said Mrs. Lewis, "I think I should be doing wrong if I showed it to you, unless Joe said I might."

"Wrong!" echoed the young lady. "Oh! if you only knew how much I have suffered since last night!" Here she paused for some moments, and added, with some violence of tone and manner, that if that suspense lasted much longer she should go mad.

"Hey-day! Miss Maria," exclaimed Mrs. Lewis,—"mad! Why, surely you cannot have been so imprudent as to have formed an attachment to Joe yourself! But you shall see the letter, as you wish it; there is only one thing you must promise, and that is, to plead Joe's cause with the lady herself."

Miss Hughes hesitated, faltered, and at length said, she would try.

At this point of the discourse Mrs. Lewis produced the laboured composition, and placed it in her hand.

Miss Hughes raised the letter, glanced at the direction, saw her own name written as plainly as the nervous fingers of its agitated writer would permit, let it fall to the ground, and sunk into the arms of Mrs. Lewis.

While this scene was acting in a private room, Grimaldi was acting upon the public stage; and conscious that his hopes depended upon his exertions, he did not suffer his anxieties, great as they were, to interfere with his performance. Towards the conclusion of the first piece he heard somebody enter Mr. Hughes's box,—and there sat the object of all his anxiety.

"She has got the letter," thought the trembling actor; "she must have decided by this time."

He would have given all he possessed to have known what had passed,—when the business of the stage calling him to the front, exactly facing the box in which she sat, their eyes met, and she nodded and smiled. This was not the first time that Miss Hughes had nodded and smiled to Joseph Grimaldi, but it threw him into a state of confusion and agitation which at once deprived him of all consciousness of what he was about. He never heard that he did not finish the scene in which he was engaged at the moment, and he always supposed, in consequence, that he did so; but how, or in what manner, he never could imagine, not having the slightest recollection of anything that passed.

It is singular enough, that throughout the whole of Grimaldi's existence, which was a chequered one enough, even at those years when other children are kept in the cradle or the nursery, there always seemed some odd connexion between his good and bad fortune: no great pleasure appeared to come to him unaccompanied by some accident or mischance: he mentions the fact more than once, and lays great stress upon it.

On this very night, a heavy platform on which ten men were standing broke down, and fell upon him as he stood underneath; a severe contusion of the shoulder was the consequence, and he was carried home immediately. Remedies were applied without loss of time, but he suffered intense pain all night: it gradually abated towards morning, in consequence of the inestimable virtues of a certain embrocation, which he always kept ready, in case of such accidents, and which was prepared from a recipe left him by his father, which, having performed a great many cures, he afterwards gave to one Mr. Chamberlaine, a surgeon of Clerkenwell, who christened it, in acknowledgment, "Grimaldi's Embrocation," and used it in his general practice some years with perfect success. Before he was carried from the theatre, however, he had had the presence of mind to beg Mrs. Lewis to be called to him, and to request her to communicate the nature of the accident to Miss Hughes, (who had quitted her box before it occurred,) as cautiously as she could. This, Mrs. Lewis, who appears to have been admirably qualified for the task in which she was engaged, and to possess quite a diplomatic relish for negotiation, undertook and performed.

There is no need to lengthen this part of his history, which, however interesting, and most honourably so, to the old man himself, who in the last days of his life looked back with undiminished interest and affection to the early time when he first became acquainted with the excellence of a lady to whom he was tenderly attached, and whose affection he never forgot or trifled with, would possess but few attractions for the general reader. The main result is quickly told: he was lying on a sofa next day, with his arm in a sling, when Miss Hughes visited him, and did not affect to disguise her solicitude for his recovery; and, in short, by returning his affection, made him the happiest man, or rather boy, (for he was not yet sixteen,) in the world.

There was only one thing that damped his joy, and this was, Miss Hughes's firm and steadfast refusal to continue any correspondence or communication with him unknown to her parents. Nor is it unnatural that this announcement should have occasioned him some uneasiness, when their relative situations in life are taken into consideration; Mr. Hughes being a man of considerable property, and Grimaldi entirely dependent on his own exertions for support.

He made use of every persuasion in his power to induce the young lady to alter her determination; he failed to effect anything beyond the compromise that for the present she would only mention their attachment to her mother, upon whose kindness and secrecy she was certain she could rely. This was done, and Mrs. Hughes, finding that her daughter's happiness depended on her decision, offered no opposition, merely remarking that their extreme youth forbade all idea of marriage at that time. Three years elapsed before Mr. Hughes was made acquainted with the secret.

After this, his time passed away happily enough: he saw Miss Hughes every evening in his mother's presence, and every Sunday she spent with them. All this time his reputation was rapidly increasing; almost every new part he played rendered him a greater favourite than before, and altogether his lot in life was a cheerful and contented one.

MASTER JOEY GOING TO VISIT HIS GODPAPA. (See p. 11.)

At this period, the only inhabitants of the house in Penton Place, were Grimaldi and his mother, and Mrs. Lewis, of whom honourable mention has been so often made in the present chapter, together with her husband; there was no servant in the house, a girl that had lived with them some time having gone into the country to see her friends, and no other having been engaged in her absence.

One night, in the middle of August, a "night rehearsal" was called at Sadlers Wells. For the information of those who are unacquainted with theatrical matters, it may be well to state that a "night rehearsal" takes place after the other performances of the evening are over, and the public have left the house. Being an inconvenient and fatiguing ceremony, it is never resorted to, but when some very heavy piece (that is, one on a very extensive scale) is to be produced on a short notice. In this instance a new piece was to be played on the following Monday, of which the performers knew very little, and there being no time to lose, a "night rehearsal" was called, the natural consequence of which would be the detention of the company at the theatre until four o'clock in the morning at least. Mr. Lewis having notice of the rehearsal in common with the other performers, locked up their dwelling-house, being the last person who left it; brought the street-door key with him, and handed it over to Mr. Grimaldi.

But after the performances were over, which was shortly after eleven o'clock, when the curtain was raised, and the performers, assembling on the stage, prepared to commence the rehearsal, the stage-manager addressed the company in the following unexpected and very agreeable terms:—

"Ladies and gentlemen, as the new drama will not be produced, as was originally intended, on Monday next, but is deferred until that night week, we shall not be compelled to trouble you with a rehearsal to-night."

This notification occasioned a very quick dispersion of the performers, who, very unexpectedly released from an onerous attendance, hurried home. Grimaldi, having something to do at the theatre which would occupy him about ten minutes, sent his mother and his friend Mrs. Lewis forward to prepare supper, and followed them shortly afterwards, accompanied by Mr. Lewis and two other performers attached to the theatre.

When the females reached home they found to their great surprise that the garden gate was open.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Grimaldi, "how careless this is of Mr. Lewis!"

It was undoubtedly, for at that time a most notorious gang of thieves infested that suburb of London—it was a suburb then. Several of the boldest had been hung, and others transported, but these punishments had no effect upon their more lucky companions, who committed their depredations with, if possible, increased hardihood and daring.

They were not a little surprised, after crossing the garden, to find that not only was the garden gate open, but that the street-door was unlocked; and pushing it gently open, they observed the reflection of a light at the end of the passage, upon which of course they both cried "Thieves!" and screamed for help. A man who was employed at Sadlers Wells happened to be passing at the time, and tendered his assistance.

"Do you wait here with Mrs. Lewis a minute," said Grimaldi's mother, "and I will go into the house; don't mind me unless you hear me scream, then come to my assistance." So saying she courageously entered the passage, descended the stairs, entered the kitchen, hastily struck a light, and on lighting a candle and looking round, discovered that the place had been plundered of almost everything it contained.

She was running up stairs to communicate their loss, when Grimaldi and his friends arrived. Hearing what had occurred, they entered the house in a body, and proceeded to search it narrowly, thinking it probable that some of the thieves surprised upon the premises might be still lurking there. In they rushed, the party augmented by the arrival of two watchmen,—chosen, as the majority of that fine body of men invariably were, with a specific view to their old age and infirmities,—and began their inspection: the women screaming and crying, and the men all shouting together.

The house was in a state of great disorder and confusion, but no thieves were to be seen; the cupboards were forced, the drawers had been broken open, and every article they contained had been removed, with the solitary exception of a small net shawl, which had been worked by Miss Hughes, and given by her to her chosen mother-in-law.

Leaving the others to search the house, and the females to bewail their loss, which was really a very severe one, Grimaldi beckoned a Mr. King, one of the persons who had accompanied him home from the theatre, and suggested in a whisper that they should search the garden together.

King readily complied, and he having armed himself with a heavy stick, and Grimaldi with an old broadsword which he had hastily snatched from its peg on the first alarm, they crept cautiously into the back garden, which was separated from those of the houses on either side by a wall from three to four feet high, and from a very extensive piece of pasture-land beyond it at the bottom, by another wall two or three feet higher.

It was a dark night, and they groped about the garden for some time, but found nobody. Grimaldi sprang upon the higher wall, and looking over the lower one, descried a man in the act of jumping from the wall of the next garden. Upon seeing another figure the robber paused, and taking it for that of his comrade in the darkness of the night, cried softly, "Hush! hush! is that you?"

"Yes!" replied Grimaldi, getting as near him as he could. Seeing that the man, recognising the voice as a strange one, was about to jump down, he dealt him a heavy blow with the broadsword. He yelled out loudly, and stopping for an instant, as if in extreme pain, dropped to the ground, limped off a few paces, and was lost in the darkness.

Grimaldi shouted to his friend to follow him through the back gate, but seeing, from his station on the wall, that he and the thief took directly opposite courses, he leapt into the field, and set off at full speed. He was stopped in the very outset of his career, by tumbling over a cow, which was lying on the ground, in which involuntary pantomimic feat he would most probably have cut his own head off with the weapon he carried, if his theatrical practice as a fencer had not taught him to carry edge tools with caution.

The companion having taken a little run by himself, soon returned out of breath, to say he had seen nobody, and they re-entered the house, where by the light of the candle it was seen that the sword was covered with blood.

The constable of the night had arrived by this time; and a couple of watchmen bearing large lanterns, to show the thieves they were coming, issued forth into the field, in hopes of taking the offenders alive or dead,—they would have preferred the latter,—and of recovering any of the stolen property, that might be scattered about. The direction which the wounded man had taken having been pointed out, they began to explore, by very slow degrees.

Bustling about, striving to raise the spirits of the party, and beginning to stow away in their proper places such articles as the thieves had condescended to leave, one of the first things Grimaldi chanced to light upon was Miss Hughes's shawl.

"Maria's gift at all events," he said, taking it up and giving it a slight wave in his hand; when out fell a lozenge-box upon the floor, much more heavily than a lozenge-box with any ordinary lozenges inside would do.

Upon this the mother clapped her hands, and set up a louder scream than she had given vent to when she found the house robbed.

"My money! my money!" she screamed.

"It can't be helped, my dear madam," said everybody. "Think of poor Mrs. Lewis, she is quite as badly off."

"Oh, I don't mean that," was the reply. "Oh! thank Heaven they didn't find my money." So with many half frantic exclamations, she picked up the lozenge-box, and there, sure enough, were thirty-seven guineas, (it was completely full,) which had lain securely concealed beneath the shawl!

They sat down to supper, but although Mrs. Grimaldi now cheered up wonderfully, and quite rallied her friend upon her low spirits, poor Mrs. Lewis, who had found no lozenge-box, was quite unable to overcome her loss. Supper over, and some hot potations, which the fright had rendered absolutely necessary, despatched, the friends departed, and the usual inmates of the house were left alone to make such preparations for passing the night as they deemed fitting.

They were ludicrous enough; upon comparing notes, it was found that nobody could sleep alone, upon which they came to the conclusion, that they had better all sleep in the same room. For this purpose, a mattress was

dragged into the front parlour, upon which the two females bestowed themselves without undressing; Lewis sat in an easy-chair; and Grimaldi, having loaded two pistols, wiped the sanguinary stains from the broadsword, and laid it by his side, drew another easy-chair near the door, and there mounted guard.

All had been quiet for some time, and they were falling asleep, when they were startled by a long loud knocking at the back-door, which led into the garden. They all started up and gazed upon each other, with looks of considerable dismay. The females would have screamed, only they were too frightened; and the men would have laughed it off, but they were quite unable from the same cause to muster the faintest smile.

Grimaldi was the first to recover the sudden shock, which the supposed return of the robbers had communicated to the party, and turning to Lewis, said, with one of his oddest looks,

"You had better go to the back-door, old boy, and see who it is."

Mr. Lewis did not appear quite satisfied upon the point. He reflected for a short time, and, looking with a very blank face at his wife, said he was much obliged to Mr. Grimaldi, but he would rather not.

In this dilemma it was arranged that Lewis should wait in the passage, and that Grimaldi should creep softly up stairs, and reconnoitre the enemy from the windows above—a plan which Lewis thought much more feasible, and which was at once put in execution.

While these deliberations were going forward, the knocking had continued without cessation, and it now began to assume a subdued and confidential tone, which, instead of subduing their alarm, rather tended to increase it. Armed with the two pistols and the broadsword, and looking much more like Robinson Crusoe than either the "Shipwrecked Mariner" or the "Little Clown," Grimaldi thrust his head out of the window, and hailed the people below, in a voice which, between agitation and a desire to communicate to the neighbours the full benefit of the discussion, was something akin to that in which his well-known cry of, "Here we are!" afterwards acquired so much popularity.

It was between two and three o'clock in the morning; the day was breaking, and the light increasing fast. He could descry two men at the door heavily laden with something, but with what he could not discern. All he could see was, that it was not fire-arms, and that was a comfort.

"Hollo! Hollo!" he shouted out of the window, displaying the brace of pistols and the broadsword to the best advantage, "what's the matter there?" Here he coughed very fiercely, and again demanded what was the matter.

"Why, sir," replied one of the men, looking up, and holding on his hat as he did so, "we thought we should never wake ye."

"And what did you want to wake me for?" was the natural inquiry.

"Why, the property!"—replied both the men at the same time.

"The what?" inquired the master of the house, taking in the broadsword, and putting the pistols on the window sill.

"The property!"—replied the two men, pettishly. "Here we have been a-looking over the field all this time, and have found the property."

No further conversation was necessary. The door was opened, the watchmen entered bearing two large sacks, which they had stumbled on in the field, and the females, falling on their knees before them, began dragging forth their contents in an agony of impatience. After a lengthened examination, it was found that the sacks contained every article that had been taken away; that not one, however trifling, was missing, and that they had come into possession, besides, of a complete and extensive assortment of house-breaking tools, including centre-bit, picklock, keys, screws, dark lanterns, a file, and a crow-bar. The watchmen were dismissed with ten shillings, and as many thousand thanks, and the party breakfasted in a much more comfortable manner than that in which they had supped on the previous night.

The conversation naturally turned upon the robbery, and various conjectures and surmises were hazarded relative to the persons by whom it had been committed. It appeared perfectly evident that the thieves, whoever they were, must have obtained information of the expected night rehearsal at Sadlers Wells; it was equally clear that if the rehearsal had not been most fortunately postponed, they would not only have lost everything they possessed, but the thieves would have got clear off with the booty into the bargain. It was worthy of remark, that the house had never been attempted when the servant girl was at home, and the females were half inclined to attach suspicion to her; but on reflection it seemed unlikely that she was implicated in the transaction, for she was the daughter of very respectable parents, not to mention her uncle having held the situation of master-tailor to the theatre for forty years, and her aunt having served the family in the same capacity as the girl herself. In addition to these considerations, she had been well brought up, had always appeared strictly honest, and had already lived in the house for nearly four years. Upon all these grounds it was resolved that the girl could not be a party to the attempt.

But, whoever committed the burglary, it was necessary that the house should be well secured, with which view a carpenter was sent for, and a great supply of extra bolts and bars were placed upon the different doors. Notwithstanding these precautions, however, and the additional security which they necessarily afforded, the females were very nervous for a long time, and the falling of a plate, or slamming of a door, or a loud ringing at the bell, or, above all, the twopenny-postman after dark, was sufficient to throw them into the extremity of terror. Being determined not to leave the house, in future, without somebody to take care of it while the family were at the theatre, they resolved, after many *pro's* and *con's*, to engage for the purpose a very trustworthy man, who was employed as a watchman to the theatre, but was not required to attend until eleven o'clock at night, by which time, at all events, some of the family would be able to reach home. The man was hired, and commenced his watch, on the night after the robbery; and there he continued to remain, every evening, until the return of the servant girl from the country released him from further attendance.

The agitation and surprise of this girl were very great, when she was informed of what had occurred, but they did not appear to be the emotions of a guilty person. All agreed that there was no good ground of suspicion against her. She was asked if she would be afraid to be left alone in the house after what had taken place, when she declared that she was not afraid of any thieves, and that she would willingly sit up alone, as she had been accustomed to do: merely stipulating that she should be allowed to light a fire in Lewis's sitting-room, for the purpose of inducing robbers to suppose that the family were at home, and that she should be provided with a large rattle, with which to alarm the neighbours at any appearance of danger. Both requests were complied with; and as an additional precaution, the street watchman, whose box was within a few yards of the door, was fee'd to be on the alert, to keep a sharp eye upon the house, and to attend to any summons from within, whenever it might be made.

The thieves, whoever they were, were very wanton fellows, and added outrage to plunder, for with the most heartless cruelty, and an absence of all taste for scientific pursuits, which would stigmatise them at once as occupying a very low grade in their profession, had broken open a closet in Grimaldi's room, containing his chosen cabinet of insects, including Dartford Blues, which, either because it was not portable, or because they thought it of no value, attaching no importance to flies, they most recklessly and barbarously destroyed. With the exception of one small box, they utterly annihilated the whole collection, including even his models, drawings, and colours; it would have taken years to replace them, if the collector had been most indefatigable; and it would have cost at least 200*l.* to have replaced them by purchase. This unforeseen calamity put a total stop to the fly-catching, so collecting together his nets, and cases, and the only box which was not destroyed, he gave them all away next day to an acquaintance who had a taste for such things, and never more employed himself in a similar manner.

After the lapse of a short time, the arrangements and precautions infused renewed confidence into the inmates of the house, and they began to feel more secure than they had yet done since the robbery; a fortnight had now passed over, and they strengthened themselves with the reflection, that the thieves having met with so disagreeable a reception, one of them at least having been severely wounded, were very unlikely to renew the attempt.

But well founded as these conjectures might seem,

they reckoned without their host, for on the third night after the girl's return they made a fresh attack, for which we will reserve a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

1797 to 1798.

The thieves make a second attempt; alarmed by their perseverance Grimaldi repairs to Hatton Garden.—Interview with Mr. Trott; ingenious device of that gentleman and its result on the third visit of the Burglars.—Comparative attractions of Pantomime and Spectacle.—Trip to Gravesend and Chatham.—Disagreeable recognition of a good-humoured friend, and an agreeable mode of journeying recommended to all Travellers.

On the third night,—the previous two having passed in perfect quiet and security,—the servant girl was at work in the kitchen, when she fancied she heard a sound as if some person were attempting to force open the garden door. She thought it merely the effect of fancy at first, but the noise continuing, she went softly up stairs into the passage, and on looking towards the door, saw that the latch was moved up and down several times by a hand outside, while some person pushed violently against the door itself.

The poor girl being very much frightened, her first impulse was to scream violently, but so far were her cries from deterring the persons outside from persisting in their attempt, that they only seemed to press it with redoubled vigour. Indeed so violent were their exertions, as if irritated by the noise the girl made, that the door was very nearly forced from its position, in which state it was discovered on a subsequent inspection. If it had not been proof against the attacks of the thieves, the girl would assuredly have been murdered. Recovering her presence of mind, however, on finding that they could not force an entrance, she ran to the street-door, flung it open, and had immediate recourse to the rattle, which she wielded with such hearty good will, that the watchman and half the neighbourhood were quickly on the spot. Immediate search was made for the robbers in the rear of the house, but they had thought it prudent to escape quietly.

Upon the return of the family, all their old apprehensions were revived, and their former fears were increased tenfold by the bold and daring nature of this second attempt. Watch was kept all night, the watchers starting at the slightest sound; rest was out of the question, and nothing but dismay and confusion prevailed.

The next morning it was resolved that the house should be fortified with additional strength, and that when these precautions had been taken, Grimaldi should repair to the police-office of the district, state his case to the sitting-magistrate, and claim the assistance of the constituted authorities.

Having had bars of iron, and plates of iron, and patent locks, and a variety of ingenious defences affixed to the interior of the garden-door, which when fastened with all these appurtenances, appeared nearly impregnable, Grimaldi accordingly walked down to Hatton Garden, with the view of backing the locks and bolts with the aid of the executive.

There was at that time a very shrewd knowing officer attached to that establishment whose name was Trott. This Trott was occasionally employed to assist the regular constables at the theatre, when they expected a great house; and Grimaldi no sooner stepped into the passage, than walking up to him, Trott accosted him with:—

"How do, master?"

"How do *you* do?"

"Pretty well, thankee, master: I was just going to call up at your place."

"Ah!" said the other, "you have heard of it, then?"

"Yes, I have heard of it," said Mr. Trott with a grin, "and heard a great deal more about it than you know on, master."

"You don't surely mean to say that you have apprehended the burglars?"

"No, no, I don't mean that, I wish I did; they have been one too many for me as yet. Why, when they first started in business there worn't fewer than twenty men in that gang. Sixteen or seventeen of 'em have been hung or transported, and the rest is them that has been at your house. They have got a hiding-place somewhere in Pentonville. I'll tell you what, master," said Trott, taking the other by the button, and speaking in a hoarse whisper, "they are the worst of the lot; up to everything they are, and take my word for it, Mr. Grimaldi, they'll stick at nothing."

Grimaldi looked anything but pleased at this intelligence, and Trott observing his disturbed countenance added,—

"Don't you be alarmed, master; what they want is, their revenge for their former disappointment. That's what it is," said Trott, nodding his head sagaciously.

"It appears very extraordinary," said Grimaldi. "This is a very distressing situation to be placed in."

"Why so it is," said the officer, after a little consideration;—"so it is, when you consider that they never talk without doing. But don't be afraid, Mr. Grimaldi."

"Oh, no, I'm not," replied the other; adding in as cool a manner as he could assume, "they came again last night."

"I know that," said the officer. "I'll let you into another secret, master. They are coming again to-night."

"Again to-night!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"As sure as fate," replied the officer, nodding to a friend who was passing down the street on the other side of the way, "and if your establishment an't large enough and powerful enough to resist 'em——"

"Large and powerful enough!" exclaimed the other. "Why there are only three women and one other male person besides myself in the house."

"Ah!" said Mr. Trott, "that isn't near enough."

"Enough! no!" rejoined Grimaldi; "and it would kill my mother."

"I dare say it would," acquiesced the officer; "my mother was killed in a similar manner."

This, like the rest of the officer's discourse, was far from consolatory, and Grimaldi looked anxiously in his face for something like a ray of hope.

Mr. Trott meditated for some short time, and then, looking up with his head on one side, said, "I think I see a way now, master."

"What is it? What do you propose? I'm agreeable to anything," said Grimaldi, in a most accommodating manner.

"Never mind that," said the officer. "You put yourself into my hands, and I'll be the saving of your property, and the taking of them."

Grimaldi burst into many expressions of admiration and gratitude, and put his hand into Mr. Trott's hand as an earnest of his readiness to deposit himself there.

"Only rid us," said Grimaldi, "of these dreadful visitors, who really keep us in a state of perpetual misery; and anything you think proper to accept shall be cheerfully paid you."

The officer replied with many moral observations on the duties of police-officers, their incorruptible honesty, their zeal, and rigid discharge of the functions reposed in them. If Mr. Grimaldi would do his duty to his country, and prosecute them to conviction, that was all he required.

To this, Grimaldi, not having any precise idea of the expense of a prosecution, readily assented, and the officer declared he should be sufficiently repaid by the pleasing consciousness of having done his duty. He did not consider it necessary to add, that a reward had been offered for the apprehension of the same offenders, payable on their conviction.

They walked back to the house together, and the officer having inspected it with the practised eye of an experienced person, declared himself thoroughly satisfied, and stated that if his injunctions were strictly attended to, he had no doubt his final operations would be completely successful.

"It will be necessary," said Trott, speaking with great pomp and grandeur, as the inmates assembled round him to hear his oration,—"it will be necessary to take every portable article out of the back kitchen, the parlour, and the bed-room, and to give me up the entire possession of this house for one night; at least until such time as I shall have laid my hand upon these here gentlemen."

It is needless to say that this proposition was agreed to, and that the females at once went about clearing the rooms as the officer had directed. At five o'clock in the afternoon he returned, and the keys of the house were delivered up to him. These arrangements having been made, the family departed to the theatre as usual, leaving Mr. Trott alone in the house; for the servant girl had been sent away to a neighbour's by his desire, whether from any feeling of delicacy on the part of Mr. Trott, (who was a married man,) or from any apprehension that she might impede his operations, we are not informed.

The officer remained alone in the house, taking care not to go near any of the windows until it was dark, when two of his colleagues, coming by appointment to the garden-door, were stealthily admitted into the house. Having carefully scrutinised the whole place, they disposed themselves in the following order. One man locked and bolted himself in the front kitchen, another locked and bolted himself in the sitting-room above stairs, and Mr. Trott, the presiding genius, in the front parlour towards the street, the last-named gentleman having, before he retired into ambuscade, bolted and barred the back-door, and only locked the front one.

Here they remained for some time,—solitary enough, no doubt, for there was not a light in the house, and each man being fastened in a room by himself, was as much alone as if there had been no one else in the place. The time seemed unusually long; they listened intently; they were occasionally deceived for an instant by some noise in the street, but it soon subsided again, and all was silent as before.

At length, some time after night-fall, a low knock came to the street-door. No attention being paid to it, the knock was repeated, and this time it was rather louder. It echoed through the house, but no one stirred. After a short interval, as if the person outside had been listening and had satisfied himself, a slight rattling was heard at the keyhole, and, the lock being picked, the footsteps of two men were heard in the passage.

They quickly bolted the door after them, and pulling from beneath their coats a couple of dark lanterns, walked softly up stairs. Finding the door of the front-room locked they came down again, and tried the front-parlour, which was also locked, whereat Mr. Trott, who was listening with his ear close to the handle, laughed immoderately, but without noise.

Unsuccessful in these two attempts, they went down stairs, and with some surprise found one of the kitchens locked, and the other open. Only stopping just to peep into the open one, they once more ascended to the passage.

"Well," said one of the men, as he came up the kitchen stairs, "we have got it all to ourselves to-night, anyway, so we had better not lose any time. Hollo!"

"What's the matter?" said the other, looking back.

"Look here!" rejoined his comrade, pointing to the garden-door, with the bolts, and iron plates, and patent locks.—"Here's protection—here's security for a friend. These have been put on since we were here afore; we might have tried to get in for everlasting."

"We had better stick it open," said the other man, "and then if there's any game in front, we can get off as we did t'other night."

"Easily said.—How do you do it?" said the first speaker; "it will take no end of time, and make no end of noise, to undo all these things. We had better look sharp. There's no rehearsal to-night, remember."

At this, they both laughed, and determining to take the front-parlour first, picked the lock without more ado. This done, they pushed against the door to open it, but were unable to do so by reason of the bolts inside, which Mr. Trott had taken good care to thrust into the staples as far as they would possibly go.

"This is a rum game!" said one of the fellows, giving the door a kick; "it won't open!"

"Never mind, let it be," said the other man; "there's a spring or something. The back-kitchen's open, we had better begin there; we know there's some property there, because we took it away before. Show yourself smart, and bring the bag."

As the speaker stooped to trim his lantern, the other man joined him, and said with an oath and a chuckle,—

"Shouldn't you like to know who it was as struck you with the sword, Tom?"

"I wish I did," growled the other. "I'd put a knife in him before many days was over. Come on."

They went down stairs, and Trott, softly gliding from his hiding-place, double-locked the street-door, and put the key in his pocket. He then stationed himself at the top of the kitchen stairs, where he listened with great glee to the exclamations of surprise and astonishment which escaped the robbers, as they opened drawer after drawer, and found them all empty.

"Everything taken away!"—said one of the men: "what the devil does this mean?"

The officer, by way of reply, fired a pistol charged only with blank powder, down the stairs, and retreated expeditiously to his parlour.

This being the signal, the sound was instantly followed by the noise of the other two officers unlocking and unbolting the doors of their hiding-places. The thieves, scrambling up stairs, rushed quickly to the street-door, but, in consequence of its being locked, they were unable to escape; were easily made prisoners, handcuffed, and borne away in triumph.

The affair was all over, and the house restored to order, when the family came home. The officer who had been despatched to bring the servant home, and left behind to bear her company in case any of the companions of the thieves should pay the house a visit, took his departure as soon as they appeared, bearing with him a large sack left behind by the robbers, which contained as extensive an assortment of the implements of their trade, as had been so fortunately captured on their first appearance.

Grimaldi appeared at Hatton Garden the next morning, and was introduced to the prisoners for the first time. His testimony having been taken, and the evidence of Mr. Trott and his men received, by which the identity of the criminals was clearly proved, they were fully committed for trial, and Grimaldi was bound over to prosecute. They were tried at the ensuing Sessions; the jury at once found them guilty, and they were transported for life.

This anecdote, which is narrated in every particular precisely as the circumstances occurred, affords a striking and curious picture of the state of society in and about London, in this respect, at the very close of the last century. The bold and daring highwaymen who took the air at Hounslow, Bagshot, Finchley, and a hundred other places of quite fashionable resort, had ceased to canter their blood horses over heath and road in search of plunder, but there still existed in the capital and its environs, common and poorer gangs of thieves, whose depredations were conducted with a daring, and disregard of consequences, which to the citizens of this age is wholly extraordinary. One attempt at robbery similar to that which has just been described, committed now-a-days in such a spot, would fill the public papers for a month; but three such attempts on the same house, and by the same men, would set all London, and all the country for thirty miles round to boot, in a ferment of wonder and indignation.

It was proved on the examination of these men at the police-office, that they were the only remaining members of a band of thieves called the "Pentonville Robbers," and the prosecutor and his family congratulated themselves not a little upon the fact, inasmuch as it relieved them from the apprehension that there were any more of their companions left behind who might feel disposed to revenge their fate.

This was Grimaldi's first visit to a Police-office. His next appearance on the same scene was under very different circumstances. But of this anon.

The fears of the family had been so thoroughly roused, and their dreams were haunted by such constant visions of the Pentonville Robbers, that the house grew irksome and distressing, especially to the females. Moreover, Grimaldi now began to think it high time that his marriage should take place; and as now that he had gained the mother's approval, he did not so entirely despair of succeeding with the father, he resolved to take a larger house, and to furnish and fit it up handsomely, on a scale proportionate to his increased means. He naturally trusted that Mr. Hughes would be more disposed to entrust his daughter's happiness to his charge when he found that her suitor was enabled to provide her with a comfortable, if not an elegant home, and to support her in a sphere of life not very distantly removed from that in which her father's fortune and possessions entitled her to be placed.

Accordingly, he gave notice to the landlord of the ill-fated house in Penton Place, that he should quit it in the following March; and accompanied by Miss Hughes, to whom, as he very properly says, "*of course*" he referred every thing, wandered about the whole neighbourhood in search of some house that would be more suitable to them. Penton Street was the St. James's of Pentonville, the Regent's Park of the City Road, in those days; and here he was fortunate enough to secure the house No. 37, which was forthwith furnished and fitted up, agreeably to the taste and directions of Miss Hughes herself.

He had plenty of time to devote to the contemplation of his expected happiness, and the complete preparation of his new residence, for Sadlers Wells theatre was then closed,—the season terminating at that time at the end of October,—and as he was never wanted at Drury Lane until Christmas, and not much then, unless they pro-

duced a pantomime, his theatrical avocations were not of a very heavy or burdensome description.

This year, too, the proprietors of Drury Lane, in pursuance of a custom to which they had adhered for some years, produced an expensive pageant instead of a pantomime, an alteration in Grimaldi's opinion very little for the better, if not positively for the worse. It having been the established custom for many years to produce a pantomime at Christmas, the public naturally looked for it; and although such pieces as Blue Beard, Feudal Times, Lodoiska, and others of the same class, undoubtedly drew money to the house, still it is questionable whether they were so profitable to the treasury as the pantomimes at Covent Garden. If we may judge from the result, they certainly were not, for after several years' trial, during the whole of which time pantomimes were annually produced at Covent Garden, the Christmas Pantomime was again brought forward at Drury Lane, to the exclusion of spectacle.

He played in all these pieces, Blue Beard and so forth; yet his parts being of a trifling description, occupied no time in the getting up, and as he infinitely preferred the company of Miss Hughes to that of a theatrical audience, he was well pleased. By the end of February, the white-washers, carpenters, upholsterers, even the painters, had left the Penton-street mansion, and there being no pantomime, it seemed a very eligible period for being married at once.

Grimaldi told Miss Hughes that he thought so; Miss Hughes replied that he had only to gain her father's consent in the first instance, and then the day should be fixed without more ado,

This was precisely what the lover was most anxious to avoid, for two reasons: firstly, because it involved the very probable postponement of his happiness; and secondly, because the obtaining this consent was an awkward process. At last he recollected that in consequence of Mr. Hughes being out of town, it was quite impossible to ask him.

"Very good," said Miss Hughes; "everything happens for the best. I am sure you would never venture to speak to him on the subject, so you had far better write. He will not keep you long in suspense, I know, for he is quite certain to answer your letter by return of post."

Mr. Hughes was then at Exeter; and as it certainly did appear to his destined son-in-law a much better course to write than to speak, even if he had been in London, he sat down without delay, and, after various trials, produced such a letter as he thought would be most likely to find its way to the father's heart. Miss Hughes, approving of the contents, it was re-read, copied, punctuated, folded, and posted.

Next day the lady was obliged to leave town, to spend a short time with some friends at Gravesend; and the lover, very much to his annoyance and regret, was fain to stay behind, and console himself as best he could in his mistress's absence, and the absence of a reply from her father, to which he naturally looked forward with considerable impatience and anxiety.

Five days passed away and still no letter came; and poor Grimaldi, being left to his own fears and apprehensions, was reduced to the most desperate and dismal forebodings. Having no employment at the theatre, and nothing to do but to think of his mistress and his letter, he was almost beside himself with anxiety and suspense. It was with no small pleasure, then, that he received a note from Miss Hughes, entreating him to take a trip down to Gravesend in one of the sailing-boats on the following Sunday, as he could return by the same conveyance on the same night. Of course he was not slow to avail himself of the invitation; so he took shipping at the Tower on the morning of the day appointed, and reached the place of his destination in pretty good time. The only water communication was by sailing-boats; and as at that time people were not independent of wind and tide, and everything but steam, the passengers were quite satisfied to get down when they did.

He found Miss Hughes waiting for him at the landing-place, and getting into a "tide" coach, they proceeded to Chatham; Miss Hughes informing him that she had made a confidant of her brother, who was stationed there, and that they purposed spending the day together.

"And now, Joe," said Miss Hughes, when he had expressed the pleasure which this arrangement afforded him, "tell me everything that has happened. What does my father say?"

"My dear," replied Grimaldi, "he says nothing at all; he has not answered my letter."

"Not answered your letter!" said the lady: "his punctuality is proverbial."

"So I have always heard," replied Grimaldi: "but so it is; I have not heard a syllable."

"Then you must write again, Joe," said Miss Hughes, "immediately, without the least delay. Let me see,—you cannot very well write to-day, but to-morrow you must not fail: I cannot account for his silence."

"Nor I," said Grimaldi.

"Unless, indeed," said Miss Hughes, "some extraordinary business has driven your letter from his memory."

As people always endeavour to believe what they hope, they were not long in determining that it must be so. Dismissing the subject from their minds, they spent the day happily, in company with young Mr. Hughes, and returning to Gravesend in the evening by another tide coach, Grimaldi was on board the sailing-boat shortly before eleven o'clock, it being arranged that Miss Hughes was to follow on the next Saturday.

In the cabin of the boat, he found Mr. De Cleave, at that time treasurer of Sadlers Wells. There are jealousies in theatres, as there are in courts, ball-rooms, and boarding-schools; and this Mr. De Cleave was jealous of Grimaldi—not because he stood in *his* way, for he had no touch of comedy in his composition, but because he had eclipsed, and indeed altogether outshone, one Mr. Hartland, "a very clever and worthy man," says Grimaldi, who was at that time also engaged as a pantomimic and melodramatic actor at Sadlers Wells. Mr. De Cleave, thinking for his friends as well as himself, hated Grimaldi most cordially, and the meeting was consequently by no means an agreeable one to him; for if he had chanced to set eyes upon Miss Hughes, great mischief-making and turmoil would be the inevitable consequence.

"In the name of wonder, Grimaldi," said this agreeable character, "what are you doing here?"

"Going back to London," replied Grimaldi, "as I suppose most of us are."

"That is not what I meant," said De Cleave; "what I meant was, to ask you what business might have taken you to Gravesend."

"Oh! no business at all," replied the other: "directly I landed, I went off by the tide-coach to Chatham."

"Indeed!" said the other.

"Yes," said Grimaldi.

The treasurer looked rather puzzled at this, sufficiently showing by his manner that he had been hunting about Gravesend all day in search of the young man. He remained silent a short time, and then said, "I only asked because I thought you might have had a dinner engagement at Gravesend perhaps,—with a young lady even. Who knows?"

This little sarcasm on the part of the worthy treasurer convinced Grimaldi, that having somewhere picked up the information that Miss Hughes was at Gravesend, and having heard afterwards from Mrs. Lewis, or somebody at the theatre, that Grimaldi was going to the same place, he had followed him thither with the amiable intention of playing the spy, and watching his proceedings. If he had observed the young people together, his mischievous intentions would have been completely successful; but the tide-coach had balked him, and Mr. De Cleave's good-natured arrangements were futile.

Grimaldi laughed in his sleeve as the real state of the case presented itself to his mind; and feeling well pleased that he had not seen them together, in the absence of any reply from Mr. De Cleave, he ascended to the deck, and left the treasurer to his meditations.

Upon the deck, on a green bench with a back to it, and arms besides, there sat a neighbour, and a neighbour's wife, and the neighbour's wife's sister, and a very pretty girl, who was the neighbour's wife's sister's friend. There was just room for one more on the bench, and they insisted upon Mr. Grimaldi occupying the vacant seat, which he readily did, for they were remaining on deck to avoid the closeness of the cabin, and he preferred the cold air of the night to the cold heart of Mr. De Cleave.

So down he sat next to the pretty friend; and the pretty friend being wrapped in a very large seaman's coat, it was suggested by the neighbour, who was a wag in his way, that she ought to lend a bit of it to Mr. Grimaldi, who looked very cold. After a great deal of blushing and giggling, the young lady put her left arm through the left arm of the coat, and Grimaldi put his right arm through the right arm of the coat, to the great admiration of the whole party, and after the manner in which they show the giants' coats at the fairs. They sat in this way during the whole voyage; and

Grimaldi always declared that it was a very comfortable way of travelling, as no doubt it is.

"Laugh away!" he said, as the party gave vent to their delight in bursts of merriment. "If we had only something here to warm us internally as well as the great-coat does externally, we would laugh all night."

"What should you recommend for that purpose?" asked the neighbour.

"Brandy," said the friend.

"Then," rejoined the neighbour, "if you were a harlequin, instead of a clown, you could not have conjured it up quicker." And with these words, the neighbour, who was a plump, red-faced, merry fellow, held up with both hands a large heavy stone bottle, with an inverted drinking-horn resting on the bung; and having laughed very much at his own forethought, he set the stone bottle down, and sat himself on the top of it.

It was the only thing wanting to complete the mirth of the party, and very merry they were. It was a fine moonlight night, cold, but healthy and fresh, and it passed pleasantly and quickly away. The day had broken before they reached Billingsgate-stairs; the stone bottle was empty, the neighbour asleep, Grimaldi and the young lady buttoned up in the great-coat, and the wife and daughter very jocose and good-humoured.

Here they parted: the neighbour's family went home in a hackney-coach, and Grimaldi bidding them good-bye, walked away to Gracechurch-street, not forgetting to thank the young lady for her humanity and compassion.

He had occasion to call at a coach-office in Gracechurch-street; but finding that it was not yet open, (for it was very early,) and not feeling at all fatigued by his journey, he determined to walk about the City for a couple of hours or so, and then to return to the coach-office. By so doing, he would pass away the time till the office opened, gain an opportunity of looking about him in that part of London to which he was quite a stranger, and avoid disturbing the family at home until a more seasonable hour. So he made up his mind to walk the two hours away, and turned back for that purpose.

CHAPTER V.

1798.

An extraordinary circumstance concerning himself, with another extraordinary circumstance concerning his Grandfather.—Specimen of a laconic epistle, and an account of two interviews with Mr. Hughes, in the latter of which a benevolent gentleman is duly rewarded for his trouble.—Preparations for his marriage.—Fatiguing effects of his exertions at the Theatre.

It was now broad day. The sun had risen and was shedding a fine mild light over the quiet streets. The crowd so soon to be let loose upon them was not yet stirring, and the only people visible were the passengers who had landed from the boats, or who had just entered London by other early conveyances. Although he had lived in London all his life, he knew far less about it than many country people who have visited it once or twice; and so unacquainted was he with the particular quarter of the City in which he found himself, that he had never even seen the Tower of London. He walked down to look at that; and then he stared at the buildings round about, and the churches, and a thousand objects which no one but a loiterer ever bestows a glance upon; and so was walking on pleasantly enough, when all at once he struck his foot against something which was lying on the pavement.

Looking down to see what it was, he perceived, to his great surprise, a richly ornamented net purse of a very large size filled with gold coin.

He was perfectly paralysed by the sight. He looked at it again and again without daring to touch it. Then, by a sudden impulse, he glanced cautiously round, and seeing that he was wholly unobserved, and that there was not a solitary being within sight, he picked up the purse and thrust it into his pocket.

As he stooped for this purpose, he observed, lying on the ground on very nearly the same spot, a small bundle of papers tied round with a piece of string. He picked them up too, mechanically. What was his astonishment, on examining this last discovery more narrowly, to find that the bundle was composed exclusively of Bank-notes!

There was still nobody to be seen; there were no passers-by, no sound of footsteps in the adjacent streets. He lingered about the spot for more than an hour, eagerly scrutinising the faces of the people, who now began passing to and fro, with looks which themselves almost seemed to inquire whether they had lost anything. No! there was no inquiry, no searching; no person ran distractedly past him, or groped among the mud by the pavement's side. It was evidently of no use waiting there; and, quite tired of doing so, he turned and walked slowly back to the coach-office in Gracechurch-street. He met or overtook no person on the road who appeared to have lost anything, far less the immense sum of money (for such it appeared to him) that he had found.

All this time, and for hours afterwards, he was in a state of turmoil and agitation almost inconceivable. He felt as if he had committed some dreadful theft, and feared discovery, and the shameful punishment which must follow it. His legs trembled beneath him so that he could scarcely walk, his heart beat violently, and the perspiration started on his face.

The more he reflected upon the precise nature of his situation, the more distressed and apprehensive he became. Suppose the money were to be found upon him by the loser, who would believe him when he declared that he picked it up in the street? Would it not appear much more probable that he had stolen it? and if such a charge were brought against him, by what evidence could he rebut it? As these thoughts, and twenty such, passed through his mind, he was more than once tempted to draw the money from his pocket, fling it on the pavement, and take to his heels; which he was only restrained from doing by reflecting that if he were observed and questioned, his answers might at once lead him to be accused of a charge of robbery, in which case he would be as badly off as if he were in the grasp of the real loser. It would appear at first sight a very lucky thing to find such a purse; but Grimaldi thought himself far from fortunate as these torturing thoughts filled his mind.

When he got to Gracechurch-street, he found the coach-office still closely shut, and, turning towards home through Coleman-street and Finsbury-square, he passed into the City-road, which then, with the exception of a few houses in the immediate neighbourhood of the Angel at Islington, was entirely lined, on both sides, with the grounds of market-gardeners. This was a favourable place in which to count the treasure; so, sitting down upon a bank in a retired spot, just where the Eagle Tavern now stands, he examined his prize. The gold in the purse was all in guineas. The whole contents of the bundle were Bank-notes, varying in their amounts from five to fifty pounds each. And this was all there was: there was no memorandum, no card, no scrap of paper, no document of any kind whatever, affording the slightest clue to the name or residence of the owner. Besides the money, there was nothing but the piece of string which kept the notes together, and the handsome silk net purse before mentioned which held the gold.

He could not count the money then, for his fingers trembled so that he could scarcely separate the notes, and he was so confused and bewildered that he could not reckon the gold. He counted it shortly after he reached home though, and found that there were 380 guineas, and 200*l.* in notes, making in the whole the sum of 599*l.*

He reached home between seven and eight o'clock, where, going instantly to bed, he remained sound asleep for several hours. There was no news respecting the money, which he longed to appropriate to his own use; so he put it carefully by, determining of course to abstain rigidly from doing so, and to use all possible means to discover the owner.

He did not forget the advice of Miss Hughes in the hurry and excitement consequent upon his morning's adventure, but wrote another epistle to the father, recapitulating the substance of his former letter, and begging to be favoured with a reply.

Having despatched this to the post-office, he devoted the remainder of the day to a serious consideration of the line of action it would be most proper to adopt with regard to the five hundred and ninety-nine pounds so suddenly acquired. Eventually he resolved to consult an old and esteemed friend of his father's, upon whose judgment he knew he might depend, and whose best advice he felt satisfied he could command.

This determination he carried into execution that same evening, and after a long conversation with the gentleman in question, during which he met all the young man's natural and probably apparent inclination to apply the money to his own occasions and views with

A BIT OF PANTOMIME OFF THE STAGE. (See p. 19.)

arguments and remarks which were wholly unanswerable, he submitted to be guided by him, and acted accordingly.

For a whole week the two friends carefully examined every paper which was published in London, if not in the hope, at least in the expectation of seeing the loss advertised; but, strange as it may seem, nothing of the kind appeared. At the end of the period named, an advertisement, of which the following is a copy, (their joint production,) appeared in the daily papers:—

"Found by a gentleman, in the streets of London, some money, which will be restored to the owner upon his giving a satisfactory account of the manner of its loss, its amount, the numbers of the notes," &c. &c.

To this was appended a full and particular address: but, notwithstanding all these precautions, notwithstanding the publicity that was given to the advertisement, and notwithstanding that the announcement was frequently repeated,—from that hour to the very last moment of his life Grimaldi never heard one word or syllable regarding the treasure he had so singularly acquired; nor was he ever troubled with any one application relative to the notice.

A somewhat similar circumstance occurred to his maternal grandfather. He was in the habit of attending Leadenhall Market early every Thursday morning, and as he frequently made large purchases, his purse was generally well lined. Upon one occasion, he took with him nearly four hundred pounds, principally in gold and silver, which formed a tolerably large bagful, the weight of which rather impeded his progress. When he arrived near the Royal Exchange, he found that his shoe had become unbuckled, and taking from his pocket the bag, which would otherwise have prevented his stooping, (for he was a corpulent man,) he placed it upon a neighbouring post, and then proceeded to adjust his buckle. This done, he went quietly on to the market, thinking nothing of his purse and its contents until some time afterwards, when, having to pay for a heavy purchase, he missed it, and after some consideration recollected the place where he had left it. He hurried to the spot. Although more than three quarters of an hour had elapsed since he had left it in the prominent situation already described, there it remained safe and untouched on the top of a post in the open street!

Four anxious days (he had both money and a wife at stake) passed heavily away; but on the fifth, Saturday—a reply arrived from Mr. Hughes, which being probably one of the shortest epistles ever received through the hands of the general postman, is subjoined verbatim.

"Dear Joe,—
"Expect to see me in a few days.
"Yours truly, R. Hughes."

If there was nothing decidedly favourable to be drawn from this brief *morceau*, there was at least nothing very appalling to his hopes: it was evident that Mr. Hughes was not greatly offended at his presumption, and probable that he might be eventually induced to give his consent to Grimaldi's marriage with his daughter. This conclusion, to which he speedily came, tended greatly to elevate his spirits; nor did they meet with any check from the sudden appearance of Miss Hughes from Gravesend.

The meeting was a joyful one on both sides. As soon as their mutual greetings were over, he showed her her father's letter, of which she appeared to take but little notice.

"Why, Maria!" he exclaimed with some surprise, "you scarcely look upon this letter, and seem to care little or nothing about it!"

"To tell you the truth, Joe," answered Miss Hughes, smiling, "my father has already arrived in town: I found him at home when I got there two or three hours back, and he desired me to tell you that he wishes to see you on Monday morning if you will call at the theatre."

Upon hearing this, all the old nervous symptoms returned, and he felt as though he were about to receive a final death blow to his hopes.

"You may venture to take courage, I think," said Miss Hughes. "I have very little fear or doubt upon the subject."

Her admirer had a good deal of both; but he was somewhat reassured by the young lady's manner, and her conviction that her father, who had always treated her most kindly and indulgently, would not desert her then. Comforted by discussing the probabilities of success and all the happiness that was to follow it, they spent the remainder of the day happily enough, and looked forward as calmly as they could to the Monday which was to decide their fate.

The following day—Sunday—was rather a wearisome one, being occupied with speculations as to what the morrow would bring forth. However, long as it seemed, the night arrived at last; and though that was long too, Monday morning succeeded it as usual.

Concealing his inward agitation as he best might, he walked to the theatre, and there in the treasury found Mr. Hughes. He was received, very kindly, but, after some trivial conversation, was much astonished by Mr. Hughes saying, "So you are going to leave Sadlers Wells, and all your old friends, merely because you can get a trifle more elsewhere,—eh Joe?"

He was so amazed at this, he could scarcely speak, but quickly recovering, said, "I can assure you, sir, that no such idea ever entered my head:—in fact, even if I wished such a thing, which, Heaven knows, is furthest from my thoughts! I could not do so, being under articles to you."

"You forget," replied Mr. Hughes somewhat sternly, "your articles have expired here."

And so they had, and so he had forgotten, and so he was constrained to confess.

"It is rather odd," continued Mr. Hughes, "that so important a circumstance should have escaped your memory: but tell me, do you know Mr. Cross?"

Mr. Cross was manager of the Circus, now the Surrey Theatre, and had repeatedly made Grimaldi offers to leave Sadlers Wells and join his company. He had done so, indeed, only a few days prior to this conversation, offering to allow him to name his own terms. But these and other similar invitations he had firmly declined, being unwilling for many reasons to leave the theatre to which he had been accustomed all his life.

From this observation of Mr. Hughes, and the manner in which it was made, it was obvious to him that some one had endeavoured to injure him in that gentleman's opinion; and fortunately chancing to have in his pocket-book the letters he had received from Mr. Cross, and copies of his own replies, he lost no time in clearing himself of the charge.

"My dear sir," he said, "I do not know Mr. Cross personally, but very well as a correspondent, inasmuch as he has repeatedly written, offering engagements to me, all of which I have declined;" and he placed the papers before him.

The perusal of these letters seemed to satisfy Mr. Hughes, who returned them, and said smilingly, "Well, then, we'll talk about a fresh engagement here, as you prefer old quarters. Let me see: your salary is now four pounds per week:—well, I will engage you for three seasons, and the terms shall be these: for the first season, six pounds per week; for the second, seven: and for the third, eight. Will that do?"

He readily agreed to a proposition which, handsome in itself, greatly exceeded anything he had anticipated. As Mr. Hughes seemed anxious to have the affair settled, and Grimaldi was perfectly content that it should be, two witnesses were sent for, and the articles were drawn up and signed upon the spot.

Then again they were left alone, and after a few moments more of desultory conversation, Mr. Hughes rose, saying, "I shall see you, I suppose, in the evening, as I am going to Drury Lane to see Blue Beard." He advanced towards the door as he spoke, and then suddenly turning round, added, "Have you anything else to say to me?"

Now was the time or never. Screwing his courage to the sticking-place, Grimaldi proceeded to place before Mr. Hughes his hopes and prospects, strongly urging that his own happiness and that of his daughter depended upon his consent being given to their marriage.

Mr. Hughes had thought over the subject well, and displayed by no means that displeasure which the young man's anxious fears had prophesied; he urged the youth of both parties as an argument against acceding to their wishes, but finally gave his consent, and by so doing transported the lover with joy.

Mr. Hughes advanced to the door of the room, and throwing it open, as he went out, said to his daughter, who chanced to be sitting in the next room, "Maria, Joe is here: you had better come and welcome him."

Miss Hughes came like a dutiful daughter, and *did* welcome her faithful admirer, as he well deserved for his true-hearted and constant affection. In the happiness of the moment, the fact that the door of the room was standing wide open quite escaped the notice of both, who

never once recollected the possibility of any third person being an unseen witness to the interview.

This was a red-letter day in Grimaldi's calendar: he had nothing to do in the evening at Drury Lane until the last scene but one of Blue Beard, so went shopping with his future wife, buying divers articles of plate, and such other small wares as young housekeepers require.

On hurrying to the theatre at night, he found Mr. Hughes anxiously regarding the machinery of the last scene in Blue Beard, which he was about getting up at the Exeter Theatre.

"This machinery is very intricate, Joe," said the father-in-law upon seeing him.

"You are right, sir," replied Joe; "and what is more, it works very badly."

"So I should expect," was the reply; "and as I am afraid we shall not manage this very well in the country, I wish I could improve it."

Among the numerous modes of employing any spare time to which Grimaldi resorted for the improvement of a vacant hour, the invention of model transformations and pantomime tricks held a foremost place at that time, and did, though in a limited degree, to the close of his life.

At the time of his death he had many excellent models of this description, besides several which he sold to Mr. Bunn so recently as a few months prior to December, 1836, all of which were used in the pantomime of "Harlequin and Gammer Gurton," produced at Drury Lane on the 26th of that month. He rarely allowed any machinery which came under his notice, especially if a little peculiar, to pass without modelling it upon a small scale. He had a complete model of the skeleton "business" in Blue Beard; and not merely that, but an improvement of his own besides, by which the intricate nature of the change might be avoided, and many useless flaps were dispensed with.

Nervously anxious to elevate himself as much as possible in the opinion of Mr. Hughes at this particular juncture, he eagerly explained to him the nature of his alterations as far as the models were concerned, and plainly perceived he was agreeably surprised at the communication. He begged his acceptance of models both of the original mechanism and of his own improved version of it: and Mr. Hughes, in reply, invited him to breakfast on the following morning, and requested him to bring both models with him. This he failed not to do. It happened that a rather ludicrous scene awaited him.

He had one or two enemies connected at that time with Sadlers Wells, who allowed their professional envy to impel them to divers acts of small malignity. One of these persons, having been told of his saluting Miss Hughes by a servant girl with whom he chanced to be acquainted, and who had witnessed the action, sought and obtained an interview that evening with the father upon his return from Drury Lane, and stated the circumstance to him, enlarging and embellishing the details with divers comments upon the ingratitude of Grimaldi in seducing the affections of a young lady so much above him, and making various wise and touching reflections most in vogue on such occasions.

Mr. Hughes heard all this, with a calmness which first of all astonished the speaker, but which he eventually attributed to concentrated rage. After he had finished his speech, the former quietly said, "Will you favour me by coming here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, sir?"

"Most certainly," was the reply.

"Allow me, however, at once," continued Mr. Hughes, "to express my thanks for your kindness in informing me of that which so nearly concerns my domestic happiness. Will you take a glass of madeira?"

"I thank you, sir," answered the other.

The wine was brought and drunk, and the friend departed, congratulating himself, as he walked away, upon having "settled Joe's business;" which indeed he had, but not after the fashion he expected or intended.

As to Grimaldi, he was up with the lark arranging the machinery and making it look and work to the best advantage; in which having succeeded to his heart's content, he put the models he had promised Mr. Hughes into his pocket, and walked down to his house to breakfast agreeably to the arrangement of the night before.

Upon his arrival, he was told that breakfast was not quite ready, and likewise that Mr. Hughes wished to see him immediately in the treasury, where he was then awaiting his arrival. There was something in the manner of the servant-girl, (the same, by-the-bye, who had told of the kissing,) as she said this, which induced him involuntarily to fear some ill, and, without knowing exactly why, he began to apprehend those thousand and one impossible, or at least improbable evils, the dread of which torment the man nervously afraid of losing some treasure upon the possession of which his happiness depends.

"Is Mr. Hughes alone?" he asked.

"No, sir," answered the girl; "there is a gentleman with him;"—and then she mentioned a name which increased his apprehensions. However, plucking up all his courage, he advanced to the appointed chamber, and in two minutes found himself in the presence of Mr. Hughes and his accuser.

The former received him coldly; the latter turned away when he saw him without vouchsafing a word.

"Come in, sir," said Mr. Hughes, "and close the door after you." He did as he was told; never, either before or afterwards, feeling so strangely like a criminal.

"Mr. Grimaldi," continued Mr. Hughes with a mingled formality and solemnity which appalled him, "I have something very important to communicate to you,—in fact, I have had a charge preferred against you of a most serious description, sir."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes, indeed, sir!" said the enemy with a look very like one of triumph.

"It is true," replied Mr. Hughes, "and I fear you will not be able to clear yourself from it: however, in justice to you, the charge shall be fully stated in your own presence. Repeat, sir, if you please," he continued, addressing the accuser, "what you told me last night."

And repeat it he did, in a speech replete with malignity, and not destitute of oratorical merit; in which he dwelt upon the serpent-like duplicity with which young Grimaldi had stolen into the bosom of a happy and hospitable family for the purpose of robbing a father and mother of their beloved daughter, and dragging down from her own respectable sphere a young and inexperienced girl, to visit her with all the sorrows consequent upon limited means and the needy home of a struggling actor.

It was with inexpressible astonishment that he heard all this; but still greater was his astonishment at witnessing the demeanour of Mr. Hughes, who heard this lengthened oration with a settled frown of attention, as though what he heard, alike excited his profound consideration and anger: occasionally, too, vouchsafing an encouraging nod to the speaker, which was anything but encouraging to the other party.

"You are quite right," said Mr. Hughes at length; on hearing which, Grimaldi felt quite wrong. "You are *quite* right—nothing can justify such actions, except one thing, and that is——"

"Mr. Hughes," interrupted the *friend*, "I know your kind heart well,—so well, that I can perceive your charitable feelings are even now striving to discover some excuse or palliation for this offence; but permit me, as a disinterested observer, to tell you that nothing can justify a man in winning the affections of a young girl infinitely above him, and, at the same time, the daughter of one to whom he is so greatly indebted."

"Will you listen to me for half a minute?" inquired Mr. Hughes in a peculiarly calm tone.

"Certainly, sir," answered the other.

"Well, then, I was going to observe, at the moment when you somewhat rudely interrupted me, that I quite agreed with you, and that nothing can justify a man in acting in the manner you have described, unless, indeed, he has obtained the sanction of the young lady's parents; in which case he is of course at liberty to win her affections as soon as he likes, and she likes to let him."

"Assuredly, sir," responded the other; "but in the present instance——"

"But, in the present instance," interrupted Mr. Hughes, "that happens to be the case. My daughter Maria has my full permission to marry Mr. Grimaldi; and I have no doubt she will avail herself of that permission in the course of a very few weeks."

The accuser was dumb-founded, and Grimaldi was delighted,—now, for the first time, perceiving that Mr. Hughes had been amusing himself at the expense of the mischief-maker.

"Nevertheless," said Mr. Hughes, turning to his accepted son-in-law with a grave face, but through all the gravity of which he could perceive a struggling smile, —"nevertheless, you acted very wrong, Mr. Grimaldi, in kissing my daughter so publicly; and I beg that whenever for the future you and she deem it essential to indulge in such amusements, it may be done in private. This is rendered necessary by the laws which at present govern society, and I am certain will be far more con-

sonant to the feelings and delicacy of the young lady in question."

With these words Mr. Hughes made a low bow to the officious and disinterested individual who had made the speech, and, opening the door, called to the servant to "show the gentleman out." Then turning to Grimaldi, he took him by the arm and walked towards the breakfast-room, declaring that the meal had been waiting half an hour or more, that the coffee would be cold, and Maria quite tired of waiting for him.

From this moment the course of true love ran smooth for once; and Mr. Hughes, in all his subsequent behaviour to Grimaldi, sufficiently evinced his high sense of the innate worth of a young man who, under very adverse circumstances and with many temptations to contend against, had behaved with so much honesty and candour.

On the Saturday after this pleasant termination of a scene which threatened to be attended with very different results, the house in Penton Street was taken possession of, and next Easter Sunday the young couple were asked in church for the first time. Sadlers Wells opened as usual on Easter Monday, and Grimaldi appeared in a new part, a more prominent one than he had yet had, and one which increased his reputation considerably.

At this time, in consequence of his great exertions in this character, after four or five months of comparative rest, he began to feel some of those wastings of strength and prostrations of energy to which this class of performers are more peculiarly exposed, and which leave them, if they attain old age, as they left Grimaldi himself, in a state of great bodily infirmity and suffering. He was cheered throughout the play; but the applause of the audience only spirited him to increased exertions, and at the close of the performance he was so exhausted and worn-out that he could scarcely stand. It was with great difficulty that he reached his home, although the distance was so very slight; and immediately on doing so, he was obliged to be put to bed.

He was wont in after life frequently to remark, that if at one period of his career his gains were great, his labours were at least equally so, and deserved the return. He spoke from sad experience of their effects at that time, and he spoke the truth. It must be a very high salary indeed that could ever repay a man,—and especially a feeling, sensitive man, as Grimaldi really was,—for premature old age and early decay.

He awoke at eleven o'clock next day, invigorated and refreshed;—this long rest was an extraordinary indulgence for him to take, for it was his constant habit to be up and dressed by seven o'clock or earlier, either attending to his pigeons, practising the violin, occupying himself in constructing such little models as have been before mentioned, or employing himself in some way. Idleness wearied him more than labour; he never could understand the gratification which many people seem to derive from having nothing to do.

It is customary on the morning after a new piece to "call" it upon the stage, with a view of condensing it where it will admit of condensation, and making such improvements as the experience of one night may have suggested. All the performers engaged in the piece of course attend these "calls," as any alterations will necessarily affect the dialogue of their parts, or some portions of the stage business connected with them.

Being one of the principal actors in the new drama, it was indispensably necessary that he should attend, and accordingly, much mortified at finding it so late, he dressed with all possible despatch and set forth towards the theatre.

CHAPTER VI.

1798.

Tribulations connected with "Old Lucas," the constable, with an account of the subsequent proceedings before Mr. Blamire, the magistrate, at Hatton Garden, and the mysterious appearance of a silver staff.—A guinea wager with a jocose friend on the Dartford Road.—The Prince of Wales, Sheridan, and the Crockery Girl.

At this time all the ground upon which Claremont, Myddelton, Lloyd, and Wilmington Squares have since been built, together with the numberless streets which diverge from them in all directions, was then pasture-land or garden-ground, bearing the name of Sadlers Wells Fields. Across these fields it was of course necessary that Grimaldi should pass and repass in going to and returning from the theatre. Upon this particular morning, a mob consisting of at least a thousand persons were actively engaged here in hunting an over-driven ox,—a diversion then in very high repute among the lower orders of the metropolis, but which is now, happily for the lives and limbs of the more peaceable part of the community, falling into desuetude: there not being quite so many open spaces or waste ground to chase oxen in, as there used to be a quarter of a century ago. The mob was a very dense one, comprised of the worst characters, and perceiving that it would be a task of some difficulty to clear a passage through it, he paused for a minute or two, deliberating whether he had not better turn back at once and take the longer but less obstructed route by the Angel at Islington, when a young gentleman, whom he had never seen before, after eyeing him with some curiosity, walked up and said,

"Is not your name Grimaldi, sir?"

"Yes, sir, it is," replied the other. "Pray, may I inquire why you ask the question?"

"Because," answered the stranger, pointing to a man who stood among a little group of people hard by,—"because I just now heard that gentleman mention it to a companion."

The person whom the young man pointed out was a very well-known character about Clerkenwell and its vicinity, being an object of detestation with the whole of the neighbourhood. This man was Lucas,—"Old Lucas" was his familiar appellation,—and he filled the imposing office of parish constable. Parish constables are seldom very popular in their own districts, but Old Lucas was more unpopular than any man of the same class, and if the stories which are current of him be correct, with very good reason, unless the man was dreadfully belied. In short, he was a desperate villain. It was very generally understood of him, that where no real accusation existed against a man, his course of proceeding was to invent a false one, and to bolster it up with the most unblushing perjury, and an ingenious system of false evidence, which he had never any difficulty in obtaining, for the purpose of pocketing certain small sums which, under the title of "expenses," were paid upon the conviction of the culprit.

Being well acquainted with this man's reputation, Grimaldi was much astonished, and not at all pleasantly so, by the information he had just received; and he inquired with considerable anxiety and apprehension, whether the young man was quite certain that it was *his* name which the constable had mentioned.

"Quite certain," was the reply. "I can't have made any mistake upon the subject, because he wrote it down in his book."

"Wrote it down in his book!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"Yes, he did indeed," replied the other: "and, more than that, I heard him say to another man beside him, that 'he could lay hold of you whenever he wanted you.'"

"The devil he did!" exclaimed Grimaldi. "What on earth can he want with me! Well, sir, at all events I have to thank you for your kindness in informing me, although I am not much wiser on the point than I was before."

Exchanging bows with the stranger, they separated; the young man mixing with the crowd, and Grimaldi turning back and going to the theatre by the longest road, with the double object of avoiding Old Lucas and keeping out of the way of the mad ox.

Having to attend to his business immediately on his arrival at the theatre, the circumstance escaped his memory, nor did it occur to him again until he returned thither in the evening shortly before the performances commenced, when being reminded of it by some accidental occurrence, he related the morning's conversation to some of his more immediate associates, among whom were Dubois, a celebrated comic actor, another performer of the name of Davis, and Richer, a very renowned rope-dancer. His communication, however, elicited no more sympathetic reception than a general burst of laughter, which having subsided, they fell to bantering the unfortunate object of Old Lucas's machinations.

"That fellow Lucas," said Dubois, assuming a grave face, "is a most confirmed scoundrel; he would stick at nothing, not even at Joe's life, to gain a few pounds, or perhaps even a few shillings."

"Joe" looked none the happier for this observation, and another friend took up the subject.

"Lucas,—Lucas," said Richer; "that is the old man who wears spectacles, isn't it?"

"That's the man," replied Dubois; "the constable, you know. He hasn't written your name down in his book for nothing, Joe, take my word for that."

"Precisely my opinion," said Davis; "he means to make a regular property out of him. Don't be frightened, Joe, that's all."

These prophetic warnings had a very serious effect upon the spirits of the party principally interested,—which his companions perceiving, hastened to carry on the joke, by giving vent to sundry other terrible surmises upon the particular crime with which the officer meant to charge him; one suggesting that it was murder, another that he thought it was forgery, (which made no great difference in the end, the offence being punished with the same penalty,) and a third good-naturedly remarking that perhaps it might not be quite so bad after all, although certainly Lucas did possess such weight with the magistrates that it was invariably two to one against the unfortunate person whom he charged with any offence.

Although he was at no loss to discern and appreciate the raillery of his friends, Grimaldi could not divest himself of some nervous apprehensions connected with the adventure of the morning; when, just as he was revolving in his mind all the improbabilities of the officer's entertaining any designs against him, one of the messengers of the theatre abruptly entered the room in which they were all seated, and announced that Mr. Grimaldi was wanted directly at the stage-door.

"Who wants me?" inquired Grimaldi, turning rather pale.

"It's a person in spectacles," replied the messenger, looking at the rest of the company and hesitating.

"A person in spectacles!" echoed the other, more agitated than before. "Did he give you his name, or do you know who he is?"

"Oh yes, I know who he is," answered the messenger, with something between a smile and a gasp;—"it's Old Lucas."

Upon this, there arose a roar of laughter, in which the messenger joined. Grimaldi was quite petrified, and stood rooted to the spot, looking from one to another with a face in which dismay and fear were visibly depicted.

Having exhausted themselves with laughing, his companions regarding his unhappy face, began to grow serious, and Dubois said,

"Joe, my boy, a joke's a joke, you know. We have had one with you, and that was all fair enough, and it's all over; but if there is anything really serious in this matter, we will prove ourselves your friends, and support you against this old rascal in any way in our power."

All the others said something of the same sort, for which Grimaldi thanked them very heartily, being really in a state of great discomfort and entertaining many dismal forebodings. It was then proposed that everybody present should accompany him in a body to the stage-door, and be witnesses to anything that the thief-taker had to say or do; it being determined beforehand that in the event of his being insolent, he should be summarily put in the New River. Accordingly they went down in a body, bearing Joe in the centre; and sure enough at the door stood Old Lucas *in propriâ personâ*.

"Now, then, what's the matter?" said the leader of the guard, upon which Grimaldi summoned up courage, and echoing the inquiry, said, "What's the matter?" too.

"You must come with me to Hatton Garden," said the constable in a gruff voice. "Come, I can't afford to lose any more time."

Here arose a great outcry, mingled with various exclamations of "Where's your warrant?" and many consignments of Mr. Lucas to the warmest of all known regions.

"Where's your warrant?" cried Davis, when the noise had in some measure subsided.

The officer deigned no direct reply to this inquiry, but looking at Grimaldi, demanded whether he was ready; in answer to which question the whole party shouted "No!" with tremendous emphasis.

"Look here, Lucas," said Dubois, stepping forward; "you are an old scoundrel!—no one knows that better, or perhaps could prove it easier, than I. Now, so far as concerns Mr. Grimaldi, all we have got to say is, either show us a warrant which authorises you to take him into custody, or take yourself into custody and take yourself off under penalty of a ducking!"

This speech was received with a shout of applause, not only by the speaker's companions, but by several idlers who had gathered round.

"I'm not a-talking to you, Mr. Dubois," said Lucas as soon as he could make himself heard. "Mr. Grimaldi's my man. Now, sir, will you come along with me?"

"Not without a warrant," said the rope-dancer.

"Not without a warrant," added Davis.

"Not upon any consideration whatever," said Dubois. "Don't attempt to touch him without a warrant; or——"

"Or what?" inquired Lucas;—"or what, Mr. Dubois?—eh, sir?"

The answer was lost in a general chorus of "The River!"

This intimation, pronounced in a very determined manner, had a visible effect upon the officer, who, at once assuming a more subdued tone, said,

"Fact is, that I've not got a warrant; (a shout of derision;) fact is, it's not often that I'm asked for warrants, because people generally knows that I'm in authority, and thinks that's sufficient." (Another.) However, if Mr. Grimaldi and his friends press the objection, I shall not urge his going with me now, provided he promises and they promises on his behalf to attend at Hatton Garden Office afore Mr. Blamire at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

This compromise was at once acceded to, and Old Lucas turned to go away: but he did not entirely escape even upon this occasion, for while the above conversation was going forward at the door, the muster of people collected around had increased to a pretty large concourse. The greater part of them knew by sight both Grimaldi and the constable; and as the latter was about to depart, the lookers-on pressed round him, and a voice from the crowd cried out, "What's the matter, Joe?"

"The matter is this, gentlemen," said Dubois, returning to the top of the steps, and speaking with great vehemence and gesticulation. "This rascal, gentlemen," pointing to the constable, "wants to drag Joe Grimaldi to prison, gentlemen."

"What for? what for?" cried the crowd.

"For doing nothing at all, gentlemen," replied the orator, who had reserved the loudest key of his voice for the concluding point.

This announcement was at once received with a general yell, which caused the constable to quicken his pace very considerably. The mob quickened theirs also, and in a few seconds the whole area of Sadlers Wells yard rang with whoops and yells almost as loud as those which had assailed the ox in the morning; and Mr. Lucas made the best of his way to his dwelling, amidst a shower of mud, rotten apples, and other such missiles. The performances in the theatre went off as usual. After all was over, Grimaldi returned home to supper, having been previously assured by his friends that they would one and all accompany him to the Police-office in the morning, and having previously arranged so as to secure as a witness the young gentleman who had given the first information regarding the views and intentions of the worthy thief-taker.

At the appointed hour Grimaldi and his friends repaired to the Police-office, and were duly presented to Mr. Blamire, the sitting magistrate, who having received them with much politeness, requested Old Lucas, who was then and there in attendance, to state his case, which he forthwith proceeded to do.

He deposed, with great steadiness of nerve, that Joseph Grimaldi had been guilty of hunting, and inciting, and inducing other persons to hunt, an over-driven ox, in the fields of Pentonville, much to the hazard and danger of his Majesty's subjects, much to the worry and irritation of the animal, and greatly to the hazard of his being lashed into a state of furious insanity. Mr. Lucas deposed to having seen with his own eyes the offence committed, and in corroboration of his eyesight produced his companions of the morning, who confirmed his evidence in every particular. This, Mr. Lucas said, was his case.

The accused being called upon for his defence, stated the circumstances as they had actually occurred, and produced his young acquaintance, who, as it appeared, was the son of a most respectable gentleman in the neighbourhood. The young gentleman confirmed the account of the affair which had been given last; deposed to the accused not having been in the field more than two or three minutes altogether; to his never having been near the ox-hunters; and to his having gone to the theatre by a route much longer than his ordinary one, for the express purpose of avoiding the ox and his hunters, Mr. Lucas and his companions.

The magistrate heard all this conflicting evidence upon an apparently very unimportant question with a great deal more patience and coolness than some of his successors have been in the habit of displaying, and after hearing it, and various audible and unreserved expressions of opinion from Mr. Dubois and others touching the respectability and probity of Lucas, turned to the accused and said,

"Mr. Grimaldi, I entirely believe your version of the affair to be the correct and true one; but I am about to act upon the deposition of this constable and his witness, and accordingly I must, however unwillingly, convict you in some penalty. I shall take care, though, that your punishment is one which shall be neither heavy to you nor serviceable to the complainant. I hereby order you to pay a fine of five shillings and to be discharged. As to you, Lucas, I would recommend you to be careful how you conduct yourself in future, and more especially to be careful as to the facts which you state upon oath."

After this decision, which his friends and himself looked upon as a complete triumph, they bowed to the magistrate and quitted the police office, Grimaldi previously paying the five shillings which he had been fined, and an additional shilling for his discharge. It was then proposed and unanimously agreed that the party should adjourn to a tavern called the King of Prussia, (now bearing the sign of the Clown) opposite Sadlers Wells theatre, for the purpose of having some lunch; and thither they proceeded and made themselves very merry with the mortified looks of Old Lucas, mingling with their mirth some dry and abstruse speculations upon the nature of the laws which compelled a magistrate to accept the oath of a reputed perjurer, and to convict upon it a person whom he conscientiously believed to be innocent of the offence laid to his charge.

While they were thus engaged, some person came running into the room, and looking hastily round, cried, "Joe! Joe! here's Old Lucas again." The friends began to laugh, and Grimaldi joined them, thinking that this was but a jest; but he was greatly mistaken, for in less than a minute Lucas entered the room.

"Why, Mister Constable!" exclaimed Dubois, rising angrily, "how dare you come here?"

"Because I have business," surlily replied Lucas. "Mr. Grimaldi has been very properly convicted of an offence at the police office, and sentenced to pay a fine of five shillings, besides one shilling more for his discharge: neither of these sums has he paid, so he is still my prisoner."

"Not paid?" exclaimed the accused. "Why, I paid the six shillings before I left the office."

This statement was corroborated by the friends, and the mute but eloquent testimony of his purse, which contained precisely that sum less than it had done an hour previously.

"It's no use," said Lucas, grinning: "pay the money, or come on with me."

"I have already paid all that was required, and I will neither give you another farthing nor allow myself to be made prisoner," was the reply.

"We'll see that," responded the constable, advancing.

"Take care," said Grimaldi warningly: "venture to touch me, and to the ground you go!"

Not a bit daunted, Old Lucas darted upon him, dragged him from his seat, and attempted to force him towards the door; in doing which he managed to tear his waistcoat and shirt-collar literally to ribands. Until then he had remained quite cool, merely acting upon the defensive; but now he gave way to his rage and fulfilled his threat to the letter by giving him a blow which felled him to the ground, and caused his nose to bleed in a manner neither sentimental nor picturesque.

He, however, immediately rose again, and producing his staff, was about, thus strengthened, to renew the combat, when a gentleman who chanced to be sitting in the room, a stranger to the party, rose, and drawing from his pocket a silver staff, shook it at Lucas, and said, "I will have no more of this violence! Let all parties adjourn to the police-office; and if Mr. Grimaldi's tale be true, and your purpose be merely that of endeavouring to extort money, as I have no doubt it is, I will take care that things be laid properly before the magistrate."

Lucas, who appeared to succumb before the vision of the silver staff, surlily assented, and they all presently presented themselves for the second time that day before Mr. Blamire, who was greatly astonished at their reappearance, and greatly surprised at the altered appearance of Old Lucas's face. The magistrate, moreover, seemed to know the silver-staffed gentleman very well, and greeted him cordially.

"Well," said Mr. Blamire after the bustle of entrance had ceased, "what's the matter now? speak,—you, Lucas!"

"Your worship," said the person called upon, "Mr. Grimaldi was fined five shillings just now, and had to pay one for his discharge; all of which he left the office without doing."

"Indeed!—Is that true?" inquired the magistrate of the clerk in an undertone.

"No, sir," replied the latter with a slight but meaning smile.

"Go on, sir," said Mr. Blamire, addressing Lucas. Lucas was a little abashed at the "aside" confab between the magistrate and his clerk; but, affecting not to hear it, he continued, "Of course, therefore, he still remained my prisoner; and I followed him and insisted upon his paying the money. This he refused; I therefore collared him for the purpose of making him return here, and in so doing I tore his shirt and waistcoat. The moment he perceived I had done so, he——" Lucas paused for an instant, and Mr. Blamire filled up the sentence by saying,

"He gave you a blow on the nose?"

"Exactly so, sir," said Lucas eagerly.

"And very well you merited it," added the magistrate, in a tone which caused a general roar of laughter. "Well, Mr. Grimaldi, let us hear what *you* have to say."

He briefly recounted the circumstances; and when he had finished, the unknown with the silver staff advanced and corroborated the statement, making several severe remarks upon the private intentions and violent manner of Lucas.

"Who," says Grimaldi, with profound respect and an air of great mystery,—"who this gentleman was, I never could ascertain; but that he was a person possessing a somewhat high degree of authority was evident to me from the great respect paid to him at the police-office. Some one afterwards told me he was a city marshal, possessing power to exercise his authority without the city; but I know not whether he was so or not."

After this disguised potentate had given his testimony, which rendered the matter conclusive, Mr. Blamire said, "Place Lucas at the bar;" which being done, the magistrate proceeded to mulct him in a penalty of five pounds, the money to go to the poor of the parish, and likewise ordered him to make Grimaldi every necessary reparation and amendment for the results of his violence.

On this sentence being pronounced, Old Lucas foamed at the mouth in a manner not unlike the over-driven ox, the original cause of his disaster, and protested, with many disrespectful oaths and other ebullitions of anger, that he would not pay one farthing: upon which the magistrate, nothing daunted, commanded him to be locked up forthwith, which was done, to the great delight and admiration not only of the friends and other spectators, but of the officers also, who, besides being in duty bound to express their admiration of all the magistrate did, participated in the general dislike of Old Lucas, as the persons best acquainted with his perjury and villany.

The friends once again bade the magistrate good morning, and soon afterwards dispersed to their several homes. They heard next day that Old Lucas, after having been under lock and key for six hours, the whole of which time he devoted to howls and imprecations, paid the fine. A few hours after he was set at liberty, he wrote a very penitent letter to Grimaldi, expressing his great regret for what had occurred, and his readiness to pay for the spoiled shirt and waistcoat upon being made acquainted with the amount of damage done. Grimaldi thought it better to let the matter remain where it did, thinking that, setting the broken nose against the torn shirt and waistcoat, Lucas was already sufficiently punished.

And after this "Old Lucas" never did anything more terrible, connected with the Sadlers Wells company at least, and, there is reason to believe, shortly afterwards lost his situation. Whether he did so or not is no great matter, further than that he appears to have been a most unfit personage to have been entrusted with any species of authority.

From this time forward, for several months, all went merry as a marriage bell. On the 11th of May following the little adventure just recorded, the marriage bell went too, for he was married to Miss Maria Hughes, at St. George's, Hanover-square, with the full consent and approbation of the young lady's parents, and to the un-

bounded joy of his own mother, by whom she had been from her earliest youth beloved as her daughter.

Five days after the wedding, the young couple paid their first visit to Mr. and Mrs. Hughes. After sitting a short time, Grimaldi left his wife there and went to the theatre, where a rehearsal in which he was wanted had been called for that morning. Upon entering the yard of Sadlers Wells, in which the different members of the company were strolling about until the rehearsal commenced, he was accosted by Richer with, "Joe, may I inquire the name of the lady with whom I saw you walking just now?"

"Nay, you need not ask him," cried Dubois: "I can tell you. It was Miss Maria Hughes."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Grimaldi; "that is not the lady's name."

"No!" exclaimed Dubois. "Why, I could have sworn it was Miss Hughes."

"You would have sworn wrong, then," he replied. "The lady's name *was* Hughes once, I grant; but on Monday last I changed it to Grimaldi."

His friends were greatly surprised at this intelligence, but they lost no time in disseminating it throughout the theatre. Congratulations poured in upon him, and so great was the excitement occasioned by the fact of "Joe Grimaldi's marriage" becoming known, that the manager, after vainly endeavouring to proceed with the rehearsal, gave up the task and dismissed the company for that morning. In the evening they had a supper at the theatre to commemorate the event, and on the following Sunday "Joe" gave a dinner to the carpenters of the theatre for the same purpose. In the long-run all the members of the establishment, from the highest to the lowest, participated in the long-expected happiness of their single-hearted and good-natured comrade.

In the summer of this year he lost a guinea wager in a somewhat ludicrous manner,—in a manner sufficiently ludicrous to justify in this place the narration of the joke which gave rise to it. He was acquainted at that time with a very clever and popular writer, who happened to have occasion to pass through Gravesend on the same day as he had to go there; and, as they met shortly before, they agreed to travel in a post-chaise and share the expense between them. They arranged to start early in the morning, as Grimaldi had to play at Sadlers Wells at night, and did so.

The journey was very pleasant, and the hours passed quickly away. His companion, who was a witty and humorous fellow, was in great force upon the occasion, and, exerting all his powers, kept him laughing without intermission. About three miles on the London side of Dartford, the friend, whose buoyant and restless spirits prevented his sitting in any one position for a minute, began incessantly poking his head out of one or other of the chaise windows, and making various remarks on the landscape and the persons or vehicles passing to and fro. While thus engaged, he happened to catch sight of a man on horseback, about a quarter of a mile behind, who was travelling in the same direction with themselves, and was coming up after the chaise at a rapid pace.

"Look, Joe!" he said; "see that fellow behind! Well mounted, is he not?"

Grimaldi looked back and saw the man coming along at a fast trot. He was a stout, hearty fellow, dressed like a small farmer, as he very probably was, and was riding a strong horse of superior make, good pace, and altogether an excellent roadster.

"Yes, I see him," was his reply. "He's well enough, but I see nothing particular about him, or the horse either."

"Nor is there anything particular about either of them that I am aware of," answered his companion; "but wouldn't you think, judging from the appearance of his nag, and the rate at which he is riding, that he would pass our chaise in a very short time?"

"Most unquestionably; he will pass us in a few seconds."

"I'll tell you what, Joe, I'll bet you a guinea he does not," said the friend.

"Nonsense!"

"Well, will you take it?"

"No; no, it would be robbing you."

"Oh, leave me to judge about that," said the friend; "I shall not consider it a robbery: and, so far from that, I'm willing to make the bet more in your favour.—Come, I'll bet you a guinea, Joe, that that man don't pass our chaise between this and Dartford."

"Done!" said Grimaldi, well knowing that, unless some sudden and most unaccountable change took place in the pace at which the man was riding, he must pass in a minute or two—"done!"

"Very good," said the other.—"Stop—I forgot: remember that if you laugh or smile, so that he can see you, between this and Dartford, you will have lost. Is that agreed?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Grimaldi, very much interested to know by what mode his friend proposed to win the wager,—"certainly."

He did not remain very long in expectation: the horseman drew nearer and nearer, and the noise of his horse's feet was heard close behind the chaise, when the friend, pulling a pistol from his pocket, suddenly thrust his head and shoulders out of the window and presented the pistol full at the face of the unconscious countryman, assuming at the same time a ferocious countenance and menacing air which were perfectly alarming. Grimaldi was looking through the little window at the back of the chaise, and was like to die with laughter when he witnessed the effect produced by this singular apparition.

The countryman was coming along at the same hard trot, with a very serious and business-like countenance, when, all of a sudden, half a man and the whole of a pistol were presented from the chaise window; which he no sooner beheld, than all at once he pulled up with a jerk which almost brought him into a ditch, and threw the horse upon his haunches. His red face grew very pale, but he had the presence of mind to pat his beast on the neck and soothe him in various ways, keeping his eyes fixed on the chaise all the time and looking greatly astonished. After a minute or so, he recovered himself, and, giving his horse the spur, and a smart cut in the flank with his riding whip, dashed across the road, with the view of passing the chaise on the opposite side. The probability of this attempt had been foreseen, however, by the other party, for with great agility he transferred himself to the other window, and, thrusting out the pistol with the same fierce and sanguinary countenance as before, again encountered the farmer's gaze; upon which he pulled up, with the same puzzled and frightened expression of countenance, and stared till his eyes seemed double their natural size.

The scene became intensely droll. The countryman's horse stood stock still; but as the chaise rolled on, he gradually suffered him to fall into a gentle trot, and, with an appearance of deep perplexity, was evidently taking counsel with himself how to act. Grimaldi had laughed in a corner till he was quite exhausted, and seeing his guinea was fairly lost, determined to aid the joke. With this view, he looked out of the vacant window, and, assuming an authoritative look, nodded confidentially to the horseman, and waved his hand as if warning him not to come too near. This caution the countryman received with much apparent earnestness, frequently nodding and waving his hand after the same manner, accompanying the pantomime with divers significant winks, to intimate that he understood the gentleman was insane, and that he had accidentally obtained possession of the dangerous weapon. Grimaldi humoured the notion of his being the keeper, occasionally withdrawing his head from the window to indulge in peals of laughter. The friend, bating not an inch of his fierceness, kept the pistol pointed at the countryman; and the countryman followed on behind at an easy pace on the opposite side of the road, continuing to exchange most expressive pantomime with one of its best professors, and to reciprocate as nearly as he could, all the nods and winks and shrugs with which Grimaldi affected to deplore the situation of his unhappy friend. And so they went into Dartford. When they reached the town, the friend resumed his seat, and Grimaldi paid the guinea. The instant the pistol barrel was withdrawn, the countryman set spurs to his horse, and scoured through the town, to the great astonishment of its inhabitants, at full gallop.

The success of this guinea wager put the friend upon telling a story of a wager of Sheridan's which was much talked of at the time, and ran thus:—

George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, used occasionally to spend certain hours of the day in gazing from the windows of a club-house in St. James's Street:—of course he was always surrounded by some of his chosen companions, and among these Sheridan, who was then the Drury Lane lessee, was ever first and foremost. The Prince and Sheridan in these idle moments had frequently remarked among the passers backwards and forwards a young woman who regularly every day carried through the street a heavy load of crockeryware, and who, the Prince frequently remarked, must be possessed of very great strength and dexterity to be able to bear so

THE WAGER. (See p. 32.)

heavy a burden with so much apparent ease, and to carry it in the midst of such a crowd of passengers without ever stumbling.

One morning, as usual, she made her appearance in the street from Piccadilly, and Sheridan called the Prince's attention to the circumstance.

"Here she is," said Sheridan.

"Who?" inquired the Prince.

"The crockery-girl," replied Sheridan; "and more heavily laden than ever."

"Not more so than usual, I think," said the Prince.

"Pardon me, your highness, I think I'm right. Oh, dear me, yes! it's decidedly a larger basket, a much larger basket," replied Sheridan. "Good God, she staggers under it! Ah! she has recovered herself.—Poor girl, poor girl!"

The Prince had watched the girl very closely, but the symptoms of exhaustion which Sheridan had so feelingly deplored were nevertheless quite invisible to him.

"She will certainly fall," continued Sheridan in a low abstracted tone; "that girl will fall down before she reaches this house."

"Pooh, pooh!" said the Prince. "*She* fall!—nonsense! she is too well used to it."

"She will," said Sheridan.

"I'll bet you a cool hundred she does not," replied the Prince.

"Done!" cried Sheridan.

"Done!" repeated his Royal Highness.

The point of the story is, that the girl *did fall down just before she reached the club-house.* It was very likely an accident, inasmuch as people seldom fall down on purpose, especially when they carry crockery; but still there were not wanting some malicious persons who pretended to trace the tumble to another source. At all events, it was a curious coincidence, and a strong proof of the accuracy of Sheridan's judgment in such matters, any way.

The friend told this story while they were changing horses, laughing very much when he had finished, as most people's friends do: and, as if it had only whetted his appetite for fun, at once looked out for another object on whom to exercise his turn for practical joking. The chaise, after moving very slowly for some yards, came to a dead stop behind some heavy waggons which obstructed the road. This stoppage chanced to occur directly opposite the principal inn, from one of the coffee-room windows of which, on the first floor, a gentleman was gazing into the street. He was a particularly tall, big man, wearing a military frock and immense mustachios, and eyeing the people below with an air of much dignity and grandeur. The jester's eyes no sooner fell upon this personage than he practised a variety of devices to attract his attention, such as coughing violently, sneezing, raising the window of the chaise and letting it fall again with a great noise, and tapping loudly at the door. At length he clapped his hands and accompanied the action with a shrill scream; upon which the big man looked down from his elevation with a glare of profound scorn, mingled with some surprise. Their eyes no sooner met than the man in the chaise assumed a most savage and unearthly expression of countenance, which gave him all the appearance of an infuriated maniac. After grimacing in a manner sufficiently uncouth to attract the sole and undivided attention of the big man, he suddenly produced the pistol from his pocket, and, pretending to take a most accurate aim at the warrior's person, cocked it and placed his hand upon the trigger.

The big man's face grew instantly blanched, he put his hands to his head, made a step, or rather stagger back, and instantly disappeared, having either falleu or thrown himself upon the floor. The friend put his pistol in his pocket without the most remote approach to a smile or the slightest change of countenance, and Grimaldi sank down to the bottom of the chaise nearly suffocated with laughter.

At Gravesend they parted, the friend going on in the same chaise to Dover, and Grimaldi, after transacting the business which brought him from town, returning to play at the theatre at night; all recollection even of the "Dartford Blues" fading as he passed through the town on his way home, before the exploits of his merry friend, which afforded him matter for diversion until he reached London.

CHAPTER VII.

1798 TO 1801.

Partiality of George the Third for Theatrical Entertainments.—Sheridan's kindness to Grimaldi.—His domestic affliction and severe distress.—The production of Harlequin Amulet a new era in Pantomime.—Pigeon-fancying and Wagering.—His first Provincial Excursion with Mrs. Baker, the eccentric Manageress.—John Kemble and Jew Davis, with a new reading.—Increased success at Maidstone and Canterbury.—Polite interview with John Kemble.

THE summer passed pleasantly away, the whole of Grimaldi's spare time being devoted to the society of his wife and her parents, until the departure of the latter from London for Weymouth, of which theatre Mr. Hughes was the proprietor. It is worthy of remark as a proof of the pleasure which George the Third derived from theatrical entertainments, that when the Court were at Weymouth, he was in the habit of visiting the theatre at least four times a week; generally on such occasions commanding the performances, and taking with him a great number of the noblemen and ladies in his suite.

Drury Lane opened for the season on the 20th of September, and Sadlers Wells closed ten days afterwards; but while the latter circumstance released Grimaldi from his arduous labours at one theatre, the former one did not tend to increase them at the other, for pantomime was again eschewed at Drury Lane, and Blue Beard, Feudal Times, and Lodoiska reigned paramount. At the commencement of the season he met Mr. Sheridan, when the following colloquy ensued:—

"Well, Joe, still living—eh?"

"Yes, sir; and, what's more, married as well."

"Oho! Pretty young woman, Joe?"

"Very pretty, sir."

"That's right! You must lead a domestic life, Joe: nothing like a domestic life for happiness, Joe: I lead a domestic life myself." And then came one of those twinkling glances which no one who ever saw them can forget the humour of.

"I mean to do so, sir."

"Right. But, Joe, what will your poor little wife do while you are at the theatre of an evening? Very bad thing, Joe, to let a pretty young wife be alone of a night. I'll manage it for you, Joe: I'll put her name down upon the free list; herself and friend.—But, mind, it's a female friend, that's all, Joe; any other might be dangerous,—eh, Joe?" And away he went without pausing for a moment to listen to Grimaldi's expressions of gratitude for his thoughtful kindness. However, he did not omit performing his friendly offer, and his wife, availing herself of it, went to the theatre almost every night he played, sat in the front of the house until he had finished, and then they went home together.

In this pleasant and quiet manner the autumn and winter passed rapidly away. In the following year, 1799, it became apparent that his young wife would shortly make him a father; and while this prospect increased the happiness and attention of her husband and parents, it added little to their slight stock of cares and troubles, for they were too happy and contented to entertain any other but cheerful anticipations of the result.

There is little to induce one to dwell upon a sad and melancholy chapter in the homely life of every-day. After many months of hope, and some of fear, and many lingering changes from better to worse, and back and back again, his dear wife, whom he had loved from a boy with so much truth and feeling, and whose excellences to the last moment of his life, many years afterwards, were the old man's fondest theme, died.

"Poor Joe! Oh, Richard, be kind to poor Joe!" were the last words she uttered. They were addressed to her brother. A few minutes afterwards, he sat beside a corpse.

They found in her pocket-book a few pencilled lines, beneath which she had written her wish that when she died they might be inscribed above her grave.

> Earth builds on Earth like glittering gold;
> Earth says to Earth, We are but mould:
> Earth builds on Earth castles and towers,
> Earth says to Earth, All shall be ours.

They were placed upon the tablet erected to her

memory. She died on the 18th of October, 1799, and was buried in the family vault of Mr. Hughes, at St. James's, Clerkenwell.

In the first passion of his grief the widower went distracted. Nothing but the constant attention and vigilance of his friends, who never left him alone, would have prevented his laying violent hands upon his life. There were none to console him, except with sympathy, for his friends were hers, and all mourned no common loss.

Mr. Richard Hughes, the brother, never forgot his sister's dying words, but proved himself under all circumstances and at all times Grimaldi's firm and steady friend. The poor fellow haunted the scenes of his old hopes and happiness for two months, and was then summoned to the theatre to set the audience in a roar; and chalking over the seams which mental agony had worn in his face, was hailed with boisterous applause in the merry Christmas pantomime!

The title of this pantomime, which was produced at Drury Lane, was, "Harlequin Amulet, or the Magic of Mona:" it was written by Mr. Powell, and produced under the superintendence of Mr. James Byrne, the ballet-master. It was highly successful, running without intermission from the night of its production until Easter, 1800. This Harlequinade was distinguished by several unusual features besides its great success; foremost among them was an entire change both in the conception of the character of Harlequin and in the costume. Before that time it had been customary to attire the Harlequin in a loose jacket and trousers, and it had been considered indispensable that he should be perpetually attitudinising in five positions, and doing nothing else but passing instantaneously from one to the other, and never pausing without being in one of the five. All these conventional notions were abolished by Byrne, who this year made his first appearance as Harlequin, and made Harlequin a very original person to the play-going public. His attitudes and jumps were all new, and his dress was infinitely improved: the latter consisted of a white silk shape, fitting without a wrinkle, and into which the variegated silk patches were woven, the whole being profusely covered with spangles, and presenting a very sparkling appearance. The innovation was not resisted: the applause was enthusiastic; "nor," says Grimaldi, "was it undeserved; for, in my judgment, Mr. James Byrne was at that time the best Harlequin on the boards, and never has been excelled, even if equalled, since that period."

The alteration soon became general, and has proved a lasting one, Harlequin having been ever since attired as upon this memorable occasion, in accordance with the improved taste of his then representative.

Grimaldi's part in this production was a singularly arduous and wearying one: he had to perform Punch, and to change afterwards to Clown. He was so exceedingly successful in the first-mentioned part, that Mr. Sheridan wished him to preserve the character throughout,—a suggestion which he was compelled resolutely to oppose. His reason for doing so will not be considered extraordinary, when we inform the present generation that his personal decorations consisted of a large and heavy hump on his chest, and a ditto, ditto on his back, a high sugar-loaf cap, a long-nosed mask, and heavy wooden shoes;—the weight of the whole dress, and of the humps, nose, and shoes especially, being exceedingly great. Having to exercise all his strength in this costume, and to perform a vast quantity of what in professional language is termed "comic business," he was compelled by fatigue, at the end of the sixth scene, to assume the Clown's dress, and so relieve himself from the immense weight which he had previously endured. "The part of Columbine," he tells us, "was supported by Miss Menage, and admirably she sustained it. I thought at the time that, taking them together, I never saw so good a Harlequin and Columbine; and I still entertain the same opinion."

Harlequin Amulet being played every night until Easter, he had plenty to do: but although his body was fatigued, his mind was relieved by constant employment, and he had little time, in the short intervals between exertion and repose, to brood over the heavy misfortune which had befallen him. Immediately after his wife's death, he had removed from the scene of his loss to a house in Baynes' Row, and he gradually became more cheerful and composed.

In this new habitation he devoted his leisure hours to the breeding of pigeons, and for this purpose had a room, which fanciers term a *dormer*, constructed at the top of his house, where he used to sit for hours together watching the birds as they disported in the air above him. At one time he had upwards of sixty pigeons, all of the very first order and beauty, and many of them highly valuable; in proof of which, he notes down with great pride a bet concerning one pigeon of peculiar talents, made with Mr. Lambert, himself a pigeon fancier.

This Mr. Lambert being, as Grimaldi says, "like myself, a pigeon-fancier, but, unlike myself, a confirmed boaster," took it into his head to declare and pronounce his birds superior in all respects to those in any other collection. This comprehensive declaration immediately brought all the neighbouring pigeon-breeders up in arms; and Grimaldi, taking up the gauntlet on behalf of the inmates of the "dormer," accepted a bet offered by Lambert, that there was no pigeon in his flight capable of accomplishing twenty miles in twenty minutes. The sum at stake was twenty pounds. The money was posted, the bird exhibited, the day on which the match should come off named, and the road over which the bird was to fly agreed upon,—the course being from the twentieth mile-stone on the Great North Road to Grimaldi's house. At six o'clock in the morning, the bird was consigned to the care of a friend, with instructions to throw it up precisely as the clock struck twelve, at the appointed mile-stone, near St. Albans; and the friend and the pigeon, accompanied by a gentleman on behalf of the opposite party, started off, all parties concerned first setting their watches by Clerkenwell Church. It was a very dismal day, the snow being very deep on the ground, and a heavy sleet falling, very much increasing the odds against the birds, the weather, of course, having great effect, and the snow frequently blinding them. There was no stipulation made, however, for fine weather; so at twelve o'clock the two parties, accompanied by several friends, took up their station in the dormer. In exactly nineteen minutes afterwards the pigeon alighted on the roof of the house. An offer of twenty pounds was immediately made for the bird, but it was declined.

The pigeons, however, did not always keep such good hours, or rather minutes; for sometimes they remained away so long on their aërial excursions, that their owner gave them up in despair. On one occasion they were absent upwards of four hours. As their owner was sitting disconsolately, concluding they were gone for ever, his attention was attracted by the apparently unaccountable behaviour of three birds who had been left behind, and who, with their heads elevated in the air, were all gazing with intense earnestness at one portion of the horizon. After straining his eyes for a length of time without avail, their master began to fancy that he discerned a small black speck a great height above him. He was not mistaken, for by-and-by the black speck turned out, to his infinite joy, to be the lost flight of pigeons returning home, after a journey probably of several hundred miles.

When the pantomime had ceased to run, Grimaldi had but little to do at Drury Lane, his duties being limited to a combat or some such business in Lodoiska, Feudal Times, and other spectacles, which he could well manage to reach the theatre in time for, after the performances at Sadlers Wells were over. Drury Lane closed in June, and reopened in September, ten days after the season at Sadlers Wells had terminated; but as he did not expect to be called into active service until December, he played out of town, for the first time in his life, in the month of November.

There was at that time among the Sadlers Wells company a clever man named Lund, who in the vacation time usually joined Mrs. Baker's company on the Rochester circuit. His benefit was fixed to take place at Rochester on the 15th, and coming to town, he waited on Grimaldi and entreated him to play for him on the occasion. Whenever it was in his power to accede to such a request it was his invariable custom not to refuse: he therefore willingly returned an answer in the affirmative.

He reached Rochester about noon on the day fixed for the benefit, rehearsed half-a-dozen pantomime scenes, and having dined, went to the theatre, every portion of which was crammed before six o'clock. On his appearance he was received with a tremendous shout of welcome; his two comic songs were each encored three times, and the whole performances went off with great *éclat*. Mrs. Baker, the manager, or manageress, at once offered him an engagement for the two following nights, the receipts of the house to be divided between them. His acceptance of this proposal delighted the old lady so

much, that the arrangement was no sooner concluded than she straightway walked upon the stage, dressed in the bonnet and shawl in which she had been taking the money and giving the checks, and in an audible voice gave out the entertainments herself, to the immense delight of the audience, who shouted vociferously.

This old lady appears to have been a very droll personage. She managed all her affairs herself, and her pecuniary matters were conducted on a principle quite her own. She never put her money out at interest, or employed it in any speculative or profitable manner, but kept it in six or eight large punch-bowls, which always stood upon the top shelf of a bureau, except when she was disposed to make herself particularly happy, and then she would take them down singly, and after treating herself with a sly look at their contents, put them up again.

This old lady had a factotum to whom attached the elegant sobriquet of "Bony Long;" the gentleman's name being Long, and his appearance bony. At a supper after the play, at which the guests were Lund, Grimaldi, Henry and William Dowton (sons of the celebrated actor of that name), the manageress, and "Bony," it was arranged that Grimaldi should perform Scaramouch in Don Juan on the following night. A slight difficulty occurred in consequence of his having brought from London no other dress than a clown's; but Mrs. Baker provided against it by sending for one Mr. Palmer, then a respectable draper and tailor at Rochester, who, having received the actor's instructions, manufactured for him the best Scaramouch dress he ever wore. The assurances which were given the artist at the time that his abilities lay in the theatrical way were not without good foundation, for two years afterwards he left Rochester, came to London, and became principal master-tailor at Covent Garden Theatre. He held the situation for some years, and then removed to Drury Lane and filled the same office, which he still continues to hold.

On the second night, the house was filled in every part, and a great number of persons were turned away. On the following evening, on which he made his last appearance, and repeated the part of Scaramouch together with that of Clown, the orchestra was turned into boxes, seats were fitted up on every inch of available room behind the scenes, and the receipts exceeded in amount those of any former occasion.

At another supper that night with Mrs. Baker, he made an arrangement to join her company for a night or two at Maidstone in the following March, provided his London engagements would admit of his doing so. They were not at all behindhand with the money; for at eight o'clock next morning "Bony Long" repaired to his lodgings, taking with him an account of the two nights' receipts, Grimaldi's share whereof came to £160, which was at once paid over to him, down upon the nail, all in three-shilling pieces. This was an addition to his baggage which he had not expected, and he was rather at a loss how to convey his loose silver up to town, when he was relieved by a tavern-keeper, who being as glad to take the silver as Grimaldi was to get notes, very soon made the exchange to the satisfaction of all parties. Having had this satisfactory settlement with the old lady, Grimaldi took his leave, and returned to town, not at all displeased with the success which had attended his first professional excursion from London.

At Christmas, Harlequin Amulet was revived at Drury Lane, in place of a new pantomime, and ran without interruption till the end of January following, drawing as much money as it had in the previous year. It was during this season or about this time that Grimaldi's old friend Davis, or "Jew Davis," as he was called, made his first appearance at Drury Lane. This is the man whose eccentricity gave rise to a ludicrous anecdote of John Kemble, of which the following is a correct version.

Kemble was once "starring" in the north of England, and paid a visit to the provincial theatre in which Jew Davis was engaged, where he was announced for Hamlet. Every member of the little company was necessarily called into requisition, and Jew Davis was "cast" to play the first grave-digger. All went well until the first scene of the fifth act, being the identical one in which Davis was called upon to appear: and here the equanimity and good temper of Kemble were considerably shaken: the grave-digger's representative having contracted a habit of grimacing which, however valuable in burlesque or farce, was far from being at all desirable in tragedy, and least of all in that philosophical tragedy of which Hamlet is the hero. But if the actor had contracted a habit of grimacing upon his part, the audience upon its part had contracted an equally constant habit of laughing at him: so the great tragedian moralizing over the skull of Yorick was frequently interrupted by the loud roars of laughter attendant upon the grave-digger's strangely comical and increasing grins.

This greatly excited the wrath of Kemble, and after the play was finished he remonstrated somewhat angrily with Davis upon the subject, requesting that such "senseless buffoonery" might not be repeated in the event of their sustaining the same parts on any subsequent occasion. All this was far from answering the end proposed: the peculiarities of temper belonging to Jew Davis were aroused, and he somewhat tartly replied that he did not wish to be taught his profession by Mr. Kemble. The latter took no further notice of the subject, but pursued the even tenour of his way with so beneficial an effect upon the treasury that his engagement was renewed for "a few nights more," and on the last of these "few nights" Hamlet was again the play performed.

As before, all went well till the grave-digger's scene commenced; when Kemble, while waiting for his "cue" to go on, listened bodingly to the roars of laughter which greeted the colloquy of Davis and his companion. At length he entered; and at the same moment, Davis having manufactured a grotesque visage, was received with a shout of laughter which greatly tended to excite the anger of "King John." His first words were spoken, but failed to make any impression; and upon turning towards Davis, he discovered that worthy standing in the grave displaying a series of highly unsuitable although richly comic grimaces.

In an instant all Kemble's good temper vanished, and stamping furiously upon the stage, he expressed his anger and indignation in a muttered exclamation closely resembling an oath. This ebullition of momentary excitement produced an odd and unexpected effect. No sooner did Davis hear the exclamation and the loud stamping of the angry actor, than he instantly raised his hands above his head in mock terror, and, clasping them together as if he were horrified by some dreadful spectacle, threw into his face an expression of intense terror, and uttered a frightful cry, half shout and half scream, which electrified his hearers. Having done this, he very coolly laid himself flat down in the grave, (of course disappearing from the view of the audience,) nor could any entreaties prevail upon him to emerge from it, or to repeat one word more. The scene was done as well as it could be without a grave-digger, and the audience, while it was proceeding, loudly expressed their apprehensions from time to time, "that some accident had happened to Mr. Davis."

Some months after this, Sheridan happening to see Davis act in the provinces, and being struck with his talents, (he was considered the best stage Jew upon the boards,) engaged him for Drury Lane; and, in that theatre, on the first day of the ensuing season, he was formally introduced by Sheridan to John Kemble, then stage-manager. By the latter he was not immediately recognised, although Kemble evidently remembered having seen him somewhere; but, after a time plainly devoted to consideration, he said,

"Oh,—ah, ah! I recollect now: you, sir, you are the gentleman who suddenly went into the grave and forgot to come out again, I think."

Davis admitted the fact without equivocation, and hastened to apologise for his ill-timed jesting. The affair was related to Sheridan, to whom, it is needless to say, it afforded the most unbounded delight, and all three, joining in a hearty laugh, dismissed the subject.

When Harlequin Amulet was withdrawn, there was very little for Grimaldi to do during the rest of the season. On the 4th of March, therefore, in pursuance of his previous arrangement, he joined the old lady at Maidstone, and was announced for Scaramouch.

The annoucement of his name excited an unwonted sensation in this quiet little town. As early as half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, the street in front of the theatre was rendered quite impassable by the vast crowd of persons that surrounded the doors. Mrs. Baker, who had never beheld such a scene in her lifetime, became at first very much delighted, and then very much frightened. After some consideration, she despatched a messenger for an extra quantity of constables, and upon their arrival threw the doors open at once, previously placing herself in the pay-box, according to custom, to take the money.

"Now, then, pit or box, pit or gallery, box or pit?" was her constant and uninterrupted cry.

"Pit, pit!" from half-a-dozen voices, the owners clinging to the little desk to prevent themselves from being carried away by the crowd before they had paid.

"Then pay two shillings,—pass on, Tom-fool!" such was the old lady's invariable address to everybody on busy nights, without the slightest reference to their quality or condition.

On this occasion of the doors being opened at five o'clock, when the house was quite full she locked up the box in which the money was deposited, and going round to the stage, ordered the performances to be commenced immediately, remarking, with a force of reasoning which it was impossible to controvert, that "the house could be but full, and being full to the ceiling now, they might just as well begin at once and have it over so much the sooner." The performance accordingly began without delay, to the great satisfaction of the audience, and terminated shortly after nine o'clock.

Grimaldi was very much caressed by the town's people, and received several invitations to dinner next day from gentlemen residing in the neighbourhood; all of which he declined, however, being already engaged to the eccentric manageress, who would hardly allow him out of her sight. Happening to walk about the town in the course of the morning, he was recognised and saluted by the boys, in the same way as when he walked the streets of London. On the night of his second appearance the house was again crowded, the door-keepers having managed, indeed, by some ingenious contrivance to squeeze three pounds more into it than on the previous night. The first evening produced £154, and the second £157. Of the gross sum his share was £155 17s., which was promptly paid to him after supper on the second and last night.

The old lady had no sooner handed it over through the ever useful "Bony," than she proposed to Grimaldi to go on with them to Canterbury, and act there for the next two nights upon similar terms. He no sooner signified his willingness to do so, than she directed bills for distribution to be made out and sent to the printer's instantly. They were composed and printed by four o'clock in the morning. No sooner did they arrive wet from the press, than men on horseback were immediately despatched with them to Canterbury, about which city the whole impression was circulated and posted before nine o'clock. The old lady had theatres at Rochester, Maidstone, and Canterbury, besides many other towns in the circuit, and the size of the whole being very nearly the same, the scenery which was suitable to one fitted them all. Early in the morning the whole company left Maidstone for Canterbury, whither Grimaldi followed in a post-chaise at his leisure. When he arrived there about one o'clock, everything was ready; no rehearsal was necessary, for there were the same performers, the same musicians, scene-shifters, and lamp-lighters. Having inspected the box-book, which notified that every takeable seat in the house was taken, he retired to Mrs. Baker's sitting-room, which was the very model of the one at Maidstone and at Rochester too, and found a good dinner awaiting his arrival. Here he was, and here they all were, in the city of Canterbury, about twenty miles from Maidstone, at one o'clock in the day, with the same scenery, dresses, decorations, and transformations as had been in use at the latter theatre late over-night, surrounded by the same actors, male and female, and playing in the same pieces which had been represented by the same men and women and the same adjuncts fourteen hours before at Maidstone.

He played here two nights, as had been agreed upon, to very nearly the same houses as at Maidstone; the first night's cash being £151 3s., and the second £159 17s., of which he received £153 9s. 6d. Early the next morning he returned to London with £311 6s. 6d. in his pocket, the profits he had acquired during an absence from the metropolis of only four days' duration.

Shortly after his return to town, and about a week before Easter, he saw with great astonishment that it was announced, or, to use the theatrical term, "underlined," in the Drury Lane bills, that Harlequin Amulet would be revived at Easter, and that Mr. Grimaldi would sustain his original character. This announcement being in direct violation of his articles of agreement at Drury Lane, and wholly inconsistent with the terms of his engagement at Sadlers Wells, he had no alternative but at once to wait upon Mr. John Kemble, the stage-manager of the former theatre, and explain to him the exact nature of his position.

He found John Kemble at the theatre, who received him with all the grandeur and authority of demeanour which it was his habit to assume when he was about to insist upon something which he knew would be resisted. Grimaldi bowed, and Kemble formally and gravely touched his hat.

"Joe," said Kemble with great dignity, "what is the matter?"

In reply, Grimaldi briefly stated his case, pointing out that he was engaged by his articles at Drury to play in last pieces at and after Easter, but not in pantomime; that at Sadlers Wells he was bound to perform in the first piece; that these distinct engagements had never before been interfered with by the management of either theatre in the most remote manner upon any one occasion; and that, however much he regretted the inconvenience to which his refusal might give rise, he could not possibly perform the part for which he had been announced at Drury Lane.

Kemble listened to these representations with a grave and unmoved countenance; and when Grimaldi had finished, after waiting a moment, as if to make certain that he had really concluded, rose from his seat, and said in a solemn tone, "Joe, one word here, sir, is as good as a thousand—you *must* come!"

Joe felt excessively indignant at this, not merely because *must* is a disagreeable word in itself, but because he conceived that the tone in which it was uttered rendered it additionally disagreeable: so, saying at once what the feeling of the moment prompted, he replied, "Very good, sir. In reply to *must*, there is only one thing that can very well be said:—I will *not* come, sir."

"Will not, Joe,—eh?" said Kemble.

"I will not, sir," replied Grimaldi.

"Not!" said Kemble again with great emphasis.

Grimaldi repeated the monosyllable with equal vehemence.

"Then, Joe," said Kemble, taking off his hat and bowing in a ghost-like manner, "I wish you a very good morning!"

Grimaldi took off his hat, made another low bow, and wished Mr. Kemble good morning; and so they parted.

Next day his name was taken from the bills, and that of some other performer, quite unknown to the London stage, was inserted instead; which performer, when he did come out, went in again,—for he failed so signally that the pantomime was not played after the Monday night.

In the short interval between this interview and the Easter Holidays, Grimaldi was engaged in the study of a new part for Sadlers Wells, which was a very prominent character in a piece bearing the sonorous and attractive title of the Great Devil. He entertained very strong hopes that both the part and the piece would be very successful; and how far his expectations were borne out by subsequent occurrences, the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER VIII.

1801 to 1803.

Hard work to counterbalance great gains.—Smart running against time.—His discharge *from* Drury Lane, and his discharge *at* Sadlers Wells.—His return to the former House.—Monk Lewis.—Anecdote of him and Sheridan, and of Sheridan and the Prince of Wales.—Grimaldi gains a Son and loses all his Capital.

THE "Great Devil" came out on Easter Monday, and its success entailed upon Grimaldi no inconsiderable degree of trouble and fatigue. He played two parts in it, and, to say nothing of such slight exertions as acting and fighting, had to change his dress no fewer than nineteen times in the progress of the piece. It made a great noise, and ran the whole season through.

As we had occasion to notice in the last chapter the ease with which he acquired a large sum of money by his professional exertions, and as we may have to describe other large gains hereafter, it may not be amiss to show in this place how much of fatigue and harassing duty those exertions involved, and how much of bodily toil and fatigue he had to endure before those gains could be counted.

At Sadlers Wells he commenced the labour of the evening by playing a long and arduous part in the before-mentioned "Great Devil;" after this he played in some little burletta which immediately succeeded it; upon the conclusion of that he was clown to the rope-dancer; and, as a wind-up to the entertainments, he appeared as clown in the pantomime, always singing two comic songs in the course of the piece, both of which were regularly encored. He had then to change his dress with all possible speed,

and to take a hurried walk, and often a rapid run, to Drury Lane, to perform in the last piece.

This immense fatigue, undergone six days out of every seven, left him at the conclusion of the week completely worn out and thoroughly exhausted, and, beyond all doubt, by taxing his bodily energies far beyond their natural powers, sowed the first seeds of that extreme debility and utter prostration of strength from which in the latter years of his life he suffered so much. The old man had a good right to say that, if his gains had been occasionally great, they were won by labour more than proportionate.

Occasionally, when the performances at Sadlers Wells were prolonged so that the curtain fell very nearly at the same time as the concluding piece at Drury Lane began, he was so pressed for time as to be compelled to dart out of the former theatre at his utmost speed, and never to stop until he reached his dressing-room at the latter. That he could use his legs to pretty good advantage at this period of his life, two anecdotes will sufficiently show.

On one occasion, when by unforeseen circumstances he was detained at Sadlers Wells beyond the usual time, he and Mr. Fairbrother (the father of the well-known theatrical printer), who, like himself, was engaged at both theatres, and had agreed to accompany him that evening, started hand-in-hand from Sadlers Wells theatre, and ran to the stage-door of Drury Lane in eight minutes by the stop-watches which they carried. Grimaldi adds that this was considered a great feat at the time; and we should think it was.

Another night, during the time when the Drury Lane company were playing at the Italian Opera-house in the Haymarket, in consequence of the old theatre being pulled down and a new one built, Mr. Fairbrother and himself, again put to their utmost speed by lack of time, ran from Sadlers Wells to the Opera-house in fourteen minutes, meeting with no other interruption by the way than one which occurred at the corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they unfortunately ran against and overturned an infirm old lady, without having time enough to pick her up again. After Grimaldi's business at the Opera-house was over, (he had merely to walk in the procession in Cymon,) he ran back alone to Sadlers Wells in thirteen minutes, and arrived just in time to dress for Clown in the concluding pantomime.

His attention to his duties, and invariable punctuality were always remarkable. To his possession in an eminent degree of these qualities, may be attributed the fact, that during the whole of his dramatic career, long and arduous as it was, he never once disappointed the public, or failed in his attendance at the theatre to perform any part for which he was cast.

He continued to attend his duties as a member of the Drury Lane company for three months without finding that any violent consequences arose from his interview with John Kemble. The only perceptible difference was, that when they met, Kemble, instead of accosting him familiarly, as he had before been accustomed to do, would pull off his hat and make him a formal bow, which Grimaldi would return in precisely the same manner; so that their occasional meetings were characterised by something about half-way between politeness and absurdity. All this pleased Grimaldi very much, but rather surprised him too, for he had confidently expected that some rupture would have followed the announcement of his determination not to act. He was not very long, however, in finding that his original apprehensions were correct, for on the 26th of June he received the following epistle.

"Drury Lane Theatre.

"Sir,

"I am requested by the proprietors to inform you that your services will be dispensed with for the next ensuing season."

This notice was signed by Powell, the then prompter, and its contents considerably annoyed and irritated the person to whom it was addressed. To command him in the first place to perform what was out of his engagement and out of his power, and to punish him in the next by dispensing with his services, which of consequence involved his dispensing with his salary, seemed exceedingly harsh and unjust treatment. For a time he even contemplated bringing an action against Sheridan, against whom, under the terms of his agreement, he would in all probability have obtained a verdict; but he ultimately gave up all idea of seeking this mode of redress, and determined to consult his staunch and sincere friend Mr. Hughes, by whose advice he was always guided. To that gentleman's house he repaired, and showing him the notice he had received, inquired what in his opinion he had best do.

"Burn the letter," said Hughes, "and don't waste a minute in thinking about it. You shall go with me to Exeter as soon as the Sadlers Wells season is over, and stop there until it recommences. You shall have four pounds a week all the time and a clear benefit. It will be strange if this does not turn out better for you than your present engagement at Drury Lane."

He accepted the terms so kindly offered, without a moment's hesitation, and determining to be guided by the advice of Mr. Hughes, thought no more about the matter.

At Sadlers Wells the summer season went on very briskly until August, when a circumstance occurred which impeded the course of his success for some time, and might have been attended with much more dangerous consequences. He played the first lieutenant of a band of robbers in the beforementioned Great Devil, and in one scene had a pistol secreted in his boot, which, at a certain point of interest, he drew forth, presented at some of the characters on the stage, and fired off, thus producing what is technically termed an effect; in the production of which on the evening of the 14th of August, he very unintentionally presented another effect, the consequences of which confined him to his bed for upwards of a month. While he was in the act of drawing out the pistol, the trigger by some accident caught in the loop of the boot, into which (the muzzle being downwards) its contents were immediately discharged. The boot itself puffed out to a great size, presenting a very laughter-moving appearance to everybody but the individual in it, who was suffering the most excruciating agony. Determined not to mar the effect of the scene, however, by leaving the stage before it was finished, he remained on until its conclusion; and then, when by the assistance of several persons the boot was got off, it was found that the explosion had set fire to the stocking, which had been burning slowly all the time he had remained upon the stage; besides which, the wadding was still alight and resting upon the foot. He was taken home and placed under medical care; but the accident confined him to the house for more than a month.

During this illness he received great attention and kindness from Miss Bristow, one of the actresses at Drury Lane Theatre. She attended upon him every morning to assist in dressing the wound, and enlivened the hours, which would otherwise have been very weary, by her company and conversation. In gratitude for her kindness, Grimaldi married her on the following Christmas Eve: and it may be as well to state in this place, that with her he lived very happily for more than thirty years; when she died.

At length, after a tedious, and, as it appeared to him *then*, almost an interminable confinement, he resumed his duties at Sadlers Wells Theatre, and the part also. But the effect was never more produced; for from that time forth the pistol was worn in his belt, in compliance with the established usage of robber chieftains upon the stage, who, at minor theatres especially, would be quite incomplete and out of character without a very broad black belt, with a huge buckle, and at least two brace of pistols stuck into it.

Drury Lane opened on the 30th of September, with "As You Like It," and "Blue Beard." Grimaldi's chief part in this piece was a combat in the last scene but one; which, being very effective, had always been regularly and vociferously applauded. It was not originally in the piece, but had been "invented" and arranged with appropriate music for the purpose of keeping the attention of the house engaged while the last scene, which was a very heavy one, was being "set up." Now, if any fresh combatant had been ready in Grimaldi's place, very probably the piece might have gone off as well as it had theretofore done; but Kemble, who was then stage-manager, as has been before stated, totally forgetting the reason of the combat's introduction, omitted to provide any substitute. The omission was pointed out at rehearsal, and then he gave directions that it should be altogether dispensed with.

The effect of this order was very unsatisfactory both to himself and the public.

There was a very full house at night, and the play went off as well as it could, and so did the afterpiece up to the time when the last scene should have been displayed; but here the stage-manager discovered his mistake too

late. The last scene was not ready, it being quite impossible to prepare it in time; and the consequence was that the audience, instead of looking at the combat, were left to look at each other, or at the empty stage as they thought fit. Upon this, there gradually arose many hisses and other expressions of disapprobation, and at last some play-goer in the pit, who all at once remembered the combat, shouted out very loudly for it. The cry was instantly taken up and became universal: some demanded the combat, others required an apology for the omission of the combat, a few called upon Kemble to fight the combat himself, and a scene of great commotion ensued. The exhibition of the last scene, instead of allaying the tumult, only increased it, and when the curtain fell it was in the midst of a storm of hisses and disapprobation.

It so happened that Sheridan had been sitting in his own private box with a party of friends all the evening, frequently congratulating himself on the crowded state of the house, and repeatedly expatiating upon the admirable manner in which both pieces went off. He was consequently not a little annoyed at the sudden change in the temper of the audience; and not only that, but, as he knew nothing at all about the unlucky combat, very much confounded and amazed into the bargain. The moment the curtain was down he rushed on to the stage, where the characters had formed a picture, and in a loud and alarming voice exclaimed,

"Let no one stir!"

Nobody did stir; and Sheridan, walking to the middle of the proscenium, and standing with his back to the curtain, said in his most solemn manner,

"In this affair I am determined to be satisfied, and I call upon somebody here to answer me one question. What is the cause of this infernal clamour?"

This question was put in such an all-important way, that no one ventured to reply until some seconds had elapsed, when Barrymore, who played Blue Beard, stepped forward and said, that the fact was, there had formerly been a combat between Mr. Roffey and Joe, and the audience were dissatisfied at its not being done.

"And why was it not done, sir? Why was it not done? Where is Joe, sir?"

"Really, sir," replied Barrymore, "it is impossible for me to say where he may be. Our old friend Joe was dismissed at the close of the last season by the stage-manager.

At this speech Sheridan fell into a great rage, said a great many angry things, and made a great many profoundly important statements, to the effect that he would be master of his own house, and that nobody should manage for him, and so forth; all of which was said in a manner more or less polite. He concluded by directing the call porter of the theatre to go immediately to "Joe's" house, and to request him to be upon the stage at twelve precisely the next day. He then took off his hat with a great flourish, made a polite bow to the actors and actresses on the stage, and walked very solemnly away.

He received Grimaldi very kindly next day, and reinstated him in the situation he had previously held, adding unasked a pound a week to his former salary, "in order," as he expressed himself, "that matters might be arranged in a manner profoundly satisfactory."

On the day after, Harlequin Amulet flourished in the bills in large letters for the following Monday; a rehearsal was called, and during its progress Kemble took an opportunity of encountering Grimaldi, and said with great good humour that he was very glad to see him there again, and that he hoped it would be very long before they parted company. In this expression of feeling Grimaldi very heartily concurred; and so ended his discharge from Drury Lane Theatre, entailing upon him no more unpleasant consequences than the easily-borne infliction of an increased salary. So ended also, the Exeter scheme, which was at once abandoned by Mr. Hughes, whose only object had been to serve his son-in-law.

"About this time," says Grimaldi, "I used frequently to see the late Mr. M. G. Lewis, commonly called Monk Lewis, on account of his being the author of a well-known novel, better known from its dramatic power than from its strait-laced propriety or morality of purpose. He was an effeminate-looking man, almost constantly lounging about the green-room of Drury Lane, and entering into conversation with the ladies and gentlemen, but in a manner so peculiar, so namby-pamby (I cannot think at this moment of a more appropriate term), that it was far from pleasing to a majority of those thus addressed. His writings prove him to have been a clever man; a consummation which his conversation would most certainly have failed signally in producing. I have often thought that Sheridan used to laugh in his sleeve at this gentleman; and I have, indeed, very good reason for believing that Lewis upon many more occasions than one was the undisguised butt of our manager. Be that as it may, Monk Lewis's play of the Castle Spectre was most undoubtedly a great card for Drury Lane; it drew immense houses, and almost invariably went off with loud applause. I have heard the following anecdote related, which if true, clearly proves that Sheridan by no means thought so highly of this drama as did the public at large. One evening it chanced that these two companions were sitting at some tavern in the neighbourhood, discussing the merits of a disputed question and a divided bottle, when Lewis, warming with his subject, offered to back his opinion with a bet.

"'What will you wager?' inquired Sheridan, who began to doubt whether his was not the wrong side of the argument.

"'I'll bet you one night's receipts of the Castle Spectre!' exclaimed the author.

"'No,' replied the manager; 'that would be too heavy a wager for so trifling a matter. I'll tell you what I'll do,—I'll bet you its intrinsic worth as a literary production!'

"Lewis received these little sallies from his lively acquaintance with the most perfect equanimity of temper, never manifesting annoyance by action further than by passing his hand through his light-coloured hair, or by word further than a murmured interjection of 'Hum!' or 'Hah!'"

There is another little anecdote in this place which we will also leave Grimaldi to tell in his own way.

"In the winter of the year I frequently had the honour of seeing his late majesty George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales, who used to be much behind the scenes of Drury Lane, delighting everybody with his affability, his gentlemanly manners, and his witty remarks. On Twelfth Night, 1802, we all assembled in the green-room as usual on that anniversary at Drury Lane Theatre, to eat cake, given by the late Mr. Baddeley, who by his will left three guineas to be spent in the purchase of a Twelfth cake for the company of that theatre. In the midst of our merriment, Sheridan, accompanied by the Prince, entered the apartment, and the former looking at the cake, and noticing a large crown with which it was surmounted, playfully said, 'It is not right that a crown should be the property of a *cake*: what say you, George?' The Prince merely laughed; and Sheridan, taking up the crown, offered it to him, adding,

"'Will you deign to accept this trifle?'

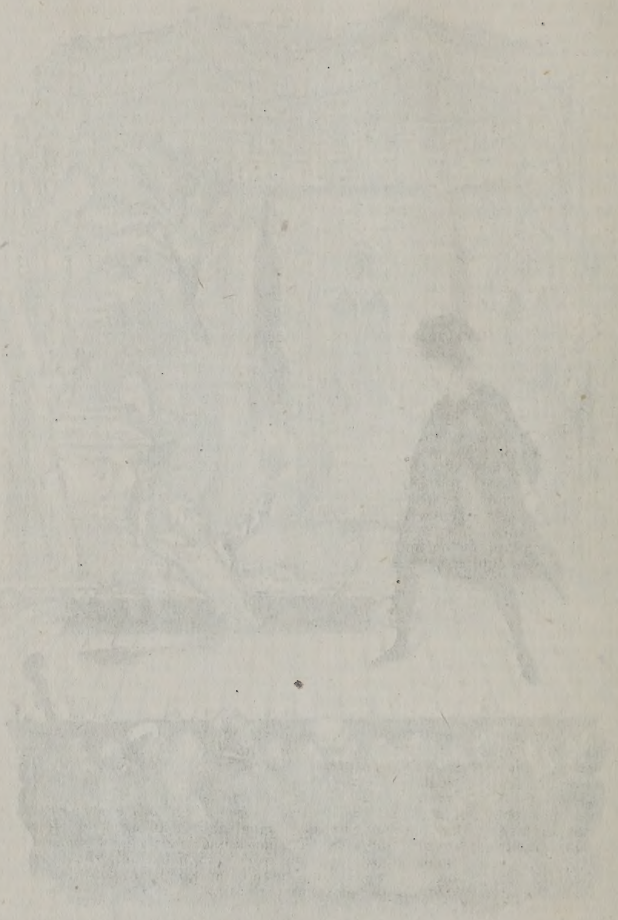
"'Not so,' replied his highness: 'however it may be doubted, it is nevertheless true that I prefer the cake to the crown, after all.' And so, declining the crown, he partook of our feast with hilarity and condescension."

There was no pantomime at Drury Lane either in 1801 or 1802, nor was any great novelty produced at Sadlers Wells in the latter year. The year 1802, indeed, seems to have been productive of no melodramatic wonder whatever; the most important circumstance it brought to Grimaldi being the birth of a son on the 21st of November, an event which afforded him much joy and happiness.

But if 1802 brought nothing remarkable with it, its successor did, for it was ushered in with an occurrence of a rather serious nature, the consequences of which were not very soon recovered. Whether it was ill-fortune or want of caution, or want of knowledge of worldly matters, it did so happen that whenever Grimaldi succeeded in scraping together a little money, so surely did he lose it afterwards in some strange and unforeseen manner. He had at that period been for some time acquainted with a very respectable merchant of the City of London, named Charles Newland (not Abraham), who was supposed to have an immense capital embarked in business, who lived in very good style, keeping up a great appearance, and who was considered to be, in short, a very rich man. He called at Grimaldi's house one morning in February, and requesting a few minutes' private conversation, said hastily,

"I dare say you will be surprised, Joe, when you hear what business I have come upon; but—but,—although I am possessed of a great deal of wealth, it is all embarked in business, and I am at this moment very short of ready money; so I want you to lend me a few hundred pounds, if it is quite convenient." All this was said with a brisk and careless air, as if such slight trifles as "a few

A STARTLING EFFECT. (See p. 37.)



hundred pounds" were scarcely deserving of being named.

Grimaldi had never touched the five hundred and odd pounds which he had picked up on Tower Hill, but had added enough to make six hundred in all. This sum he hastened to place before his friend, assuring him, with great sincerity, that if he had possessed double or treble the amount, he would have been happy to have lent it him with the greatest readiness. The merchant expressed the gratification he derived from his friendship, and giving him a bill for the money at three months' date, shook his hand warmly and left him.

The bill was dishonoured; the merchant became bankrupt, left England for America, and died upon the passage out. And thus the contents of the net purse and the bundle of notes were lost as easily as they were gained, with the addition of some small savings besides.

CHAPTER IX.

1803.

Containing a very extraordinary incident well worthy of the reader's attention.

One evening in the second week of November 1803, Grimaldi, then playing at Drury Lane, had been called by the prompter, and was passing from the green-room to the stage, when a messenger informed him that two gentlemen were waiting to see him at the stage-door. Afraid of keeping the stage waiting, he enjoined the messenger to tell the gentlemen that he was engaged at that moment, but that he would come down to them directly he left the stage. The play was "A Bold Stroke for a Wife:" Miss Mellon was Anne, Bannister Feingwell, Aitkin Simon Pure, and Grimaldi Aminadab.

As soon as he could get away from the stage, he hurried down stairs, and inquiring who wanted him, was introduced to two strangers, who were patiently awaiting his arrival. They were young men of gentlemanly appearance, and upon hearing the words, "Here's Mr. Grimaldi—who wants him?" one of them turned hastily round and warmly accosted him.

He looked about his own age, and had evidently been accustomed to a much warmer climate than that of England. He wore the fashionable evening-dress of the day,—that is to say, a blue body-coat with gilt buttons, a white waistcoat, and tight pantaloons,—and carried in his hand a small gold-headed cane.

"Joe, my lad!" exclaimed this person, holding out his hand in some agitation, how goes it with you now, old fellow?"

He was not a little surprised at this familiar address from a person whom he was not conscious of ever having seen in his life, and, after a moment's pause, replied that he really had not the pleasure of the stranger's acquaintance.

"Not the pleasure of my acquaintance!" repeated the stranger with a loud laugh. "Well, Joe, that seems funny, anyhow!" He appealed to his companion, who concurred in the opinion, and they both laughed heartily. This was all very funny to the strangers, but not at all so to Grimaldi: he had a vague idea that they were rather laughing at than with him, and, as much offended as surprised, was turning away, when the person who had spoken first said in rather a tremulous voice,

"Joe, don't you know me now?"

He turned and gazed at him again. He had opened his shirt, and was pointing to a scar upon his breast, the sight of which at once assured him that it was no other than his brother who stood before him,—his only brother, who had disappeared under the circumstances narrated in an earlier part of these memoirs.

They were naturally much affected by this meeting, especially the elder brother, who had been so suddenly summoned into the presence of the near relative whom long ago he had given up for lost. They embraced again and again, and gave vent to their feelings in tears.

"Come up stairs," said Grimaldi, as soon as the first surprise was over; Mr. Wroughton is there—Mr. Wroughton, who was the means of your going to sea,—he'll be delighted to see you." The brothers were hurrying away, when the friend, whose presence they had quite forgotten in their emotion, said,

"Well, John, then I'll wish you good night!"

"Good night! good night!" said the other, shaking his hand; "I shall see you in the morning."

"Yes," replied the friend; "at ten, mind!"

"At ten precisely: I shall not forget," answered John.

The friend, to whom he had not introduced his brother in any way, departed; and they went upon the stage together, where Grimaldi introduced his brother to Powell, Bannister, Wroughton, and many others in the green-room, who, attracted by the singularity of his return under such circumstances, had collected round them.

Having his stage business to attend to, he had very little time for conversation; but of course he availed himself of every moment that he could spare off the stage, and in answer to his inquiries, his brother assured him that his trip had been eminently successful.

"At this moment," he said, slapping his breast-pocket, "I have six hundred pounds here."

"Why, John," said his brother, "it's very dangerous to carry so much money about with you!"

"Dangerous!" replied John, smiling: "we sailors know nothing about danger. But, my lad, even if all this were gone, I should not be penniless." And he gave a knowing wink, which induced his brother to believe that he had indeed "made a good trip of it."

At this moment Grimaldi was again called upon the stage; and Mr. Wroughton, taking that opportunity of talking to his brother, made many kind inquiries of him relative to his success and the state of his finances. In reply to these questions he made in effect the same statement that he had already communicated to Joseph, and exhibited as evidence of the truth of his declarations a coarse canvas bag, stuffed full of various coins, which he carefully replaced in his pocket again.

As soon as the comedy was ended, Grimaldi joined him; and Mr. Wroughton, having congratulated his brother on his return, and the fortunate issue of his adventures, bade them good night; when Grimaldi took occasion to ask how long the sailor had been in town.

He replied, two or three hours back; that he had merely tarried to get some dinner, and had come straight to the theatre. In answer to inquiries relative to what he intended doing, he said he had not bestowed a thought upon the matter, and that the only topic which had occupied his mind was his anxiety to see his mother and brother. A long and affectionate conversation ensued, in the course of which it was proposed by Joseph, that as his mother lived with himself and wife, and they had a larger house than they required, the brother should join them, and they should all live together. To this the brother most gladly and joyfully assented, and adding that he must see his mother that night, or his anxiety would not suffer him to sleep, asked where she lived.

Grimaldi gave him the address directly; but, as he did not play in the afterpiece, said that he had done for the night, and that if he would wait while he changed his dress, he would go with him. His brother was, of course, glad to hear there was no necessity for them to separate, and Grimaldi hurried away to his dressing-room, leaving him on the stage.

The agitation of his feelings, the suddenness of his brother's return, the good fortune which had attended him in his absence, the gentility of his appearance, and his possession of so much money, all together confused him so, that he could scarcely use his hands. He stood still every now and then quite lost in wonder, and then suddenly recollecting that his brother was waiting, looked over the room again and again for articles of dress that were lying before him. At length, after having occupied a much longer time than usual in changing his dress, he was ready, and ran down to the stage. On his way he met Powell, who heartily congratulated him on the return of his relative, making about the thirtieth who had been kind enough to do so already. Grimaldi asked him, more from nervousness than for information, if he had seen him lately.

"Not a minute ago," was the reply; "he is waiting for you upon the stage. I won't detain you, for he complains that you have been longer away now, than you said you would be."

Grimaldi hurried downstairs to the spot where he had left his brother. He was not there.

"Who are you looking for, Joe?" inquired Bannister, as he saw him looking eagerly about.

"For my brother," he answered. "I left him here a little while back."

"Well, and I saw and spoke to him not a minute ago," said Bannister. "When he left me, he went in that direction" (pointing towards the passage that led to the stage-door). "I should think he had left the theatre."

Grimaldi ran to the stage-door, and asked the porter if his brother had passed. The man said he had, not a minute back; he could not have got out of the street by that time.

He ran out at the door, and then up and down the street several times, but saw nothing of him. Where could he be gone to? Possibly, finding him longer gone than he anticipated, he might have stepped out to call upon one of his old friends close by whom he had not seen for so many years, with the intention of returning to the theatre. This was not unlikely; for in the immediate neighbourhood there lived a Mr. Bowley, who had been his bosom friend when they were boys. The idea no sooner struck Grimaldi than he ran to the house and knocked hastily at the door. The man himself answered the knock, and was evidently greatly surprised.

"I have indeed seen your brother," he said, in reply to Grimaldi's question. "Good God! I was never so amazed in all my life."

"Is he here now?" was the anxious inquiry.

"No: but he has not been gone a minute; he cannot have gone many yards."

"Which way?"

"That way,—towards Duke Street."

"He must have gone," thought Grimaldi, "to call on Mr. Bailey, our old landlord." He hurried away to the house in Little Wild Street, and knocked long and loudly at the door. The people were asleep. He knocked again and rang violently, being in a state of great excitement; at length a servant-girl thrust her head out of an upper window, and said, both sulkily and sleepily,—

"I tell you, again, he is not at home."

"What are you talking about? Who is not at home?"

"Why, Mr. Bailey: I told you so before. What do you keep on knocking for, at this time of night?"

He could not understand a word of all this, but hurriedly told his name, and requested the girl to come down directly, for he wished to speak to her. The head was directly withdrawn, the window closed, and in a minute or two afterwards the girl appeared at the street-door.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon, sir," she said, after pouring forth a volume of apologies. "But there was a gentleman here knocking and ringing very violently not a minute before you came I told him Mr. Bailey was not at home; and when I heard you at the door, I thought it was him, and that he would not go away."

Grimaldi was breathless with the speed he had made, and trembling with vague apprehensions of he knew not what. He asked if she had seen the gentleman's face. The girl, surprised at his emotion, replied that she had not; she had only answered him from the window, being afraid to open the door to a stranger so long after dark when all the family were out. The only thing she had noticed was that he had got a white waistcoat on; for she had thought at the time, seeing him dressed, that perhaps he might have called to take her master to a party.

He must have gone back to the theatre.

He left the surprised girl standing at the door, and ran to Drury Lane. Here again he was disappointed; he had not been seen. He ran from place to place, and from house to house, wherever he thought it possible that his brother could have called, but nobody had heard of or seen him. Many of the persons to whom he appealed openly expressed their doubts to each other of his sanity of mind; which were really not without a shadow of probability, seeing that he knocked them out of their beds, and, with every appearance of agitation and wildness, demanded if they had seen his brother, whom nobody had heard of for fourteen years, and whom most of them considered dead.

It was so late now, that the theatre was just shutting up; but he ran back once more, and again inquired if his brother had been there. Hearing he had not, he concluded that, recollecting the address he had mentioned, he had gone straight to his mother's home. This seemed probable; and yet he felt a degree of dismay and alarm which he had never before experienced, even when there were good grounds for such feelings.

The more he thought of this, however, the more probable it seemed, and he blamed himself as he walked quickly homewards for not having thought of it sooner. He remembered the anxiety his brother had expressed to see their mother, the plan they had discussed for their all living together, and the many little schemes of future happiness which they had talked over in their hurried interview, and in all of which she was comprised. He reached home, and, composing himself as well as he could, entered the little room in which they usually supped after the play. His brother was not there, but his mother was, and, as she looked much paler than usual, he thought she had seen him.

"Well, mother," he said, "has anything strange occurred here to-night?"

"No: nothing that I have heard of."

"What! no stranger arrived!—no long-lost relative recovered!" exclaimed Grimaldi, all his former apprehensions returning.

"What do you mean?"

"Mean! Why, that John is come home safe and well, and with money enough to make all our fortunes."

His mother screamed wildly at this intelligence, and fainted: she recovered after a time, and Grimaldi recounted to her and his wife the events of the evening, precisely as they are here narrated.

They were greatly amazed at the recital. The mother held that he would be sure to come before the night was over; that he had probably met with some of his old friends, and would be there after he had left them. She insisted that Grimaldi, who was tired, should go to bed, while she sat up and waited for her son. He did so, and the mother remained all through the long night anxiously expecting his arrival.

This may appear a long story, but its conclusion invests it with a degree of interest which warrants the detail. The running away to sea of a young man, and his return after a lapse of years, is, and ever has been, no novelty in this island. This is not the burden of the tale. It possessed an awful interest to those whom it immediately concerned, and cannot fail to have some for the most indifferent reader.

From that night in November 1803, to this month of January 1838, the missing man was never seen again; nor was any intelligence or any clue of the faintest or most remote description ever obtained by his friends respecting him.

Next morning, and many mornings afterwards, the mother still anxiously and hopelessly expected the arrival of her son. Again and again did she question Grimaldi about him—his appearance, his manner, what he said, and all the details of his disappearance; again and again was every minute fact recalled, and every possible conjecture hazarded relative to his fate. He could scarcely persuade himself but that the events of the preceding night were a delusion of his brain, until the inquiries after his brother which were made by those who had seen him on the previous night placed them beyond all doubt. He communicated to his friends the strange history of the last few hours, with all the circumstances of his brother's sudden appearance, and of his equally sudden disappearance. He was advised to wait a little while before he made the circumstances public, in the hope that he might have been induced to spend the night with some shipmates, and might speedily return.

But a week passed away, and then further silence would have been criminal, and he proceeded to set on foot every inquiry which his own mind could suggest, or the kindness of his friends prompted them to advise. A powerful nobleman who at that time used to frequent Drury Lane Theatre, and who had on many occasions expressed his favourable opinion of Grimaldi, interested himself greatly in the matter, and set on foot a series of inquiries at the Admiralty: every source of information possessed by that establishment that was deemed at all likely to throw any light upon the subject was resorted to, but in vain; the newspapers were searched to ascertain what ships had arrived in the river or upon the coast that day—whence they came, what crews they carried, what passengers they had: the police-officers were paid to search all London through, and endeavour to gain some information, if it were only of the lost man's death. Everything was tried by the family, and by many very powerful friends whom the distressing nature of the inquiry raised up about them, to trace the object of their regret and labour, but all in vain. The sailor was seen no more.

Various surmises were afloat at the time regarding the real nature of this mysterious transaction: many of them, of course, were absurd enough, but the two most probable conjectures appear to have been hazarded many years afterwards, and when all chance of the man being alive were apparently at an end,—the one by the noble lord who had pursued the investigation at the Admiralty, and the other by a shrewd long-headed police-officer, who had been employed to set various inquiries on foot in the neighbourhood of the theatre.

The former suggested that a press-gang, to whom the person of the brother was known, might possibly have pounced upon him in some by-street and have carried him off; in which case, as he had previously assumed a false name, the fact of his friends receiving no intelli-

gence of him was easily accounted for; while, as nothing could be more probable than that he was slain in one of the naval engagements so rife about that time, his never appearing again was easily explained. This solution of the mystery, however, was by no means satisfactory to his friends, as it was liable to many very obvious doubts and objections. Upon the whole, they felt inclined to give far more credence to the still more tragical, but, it is to be feared, more probable explanation which the experience of the police-officer suggested.

This man was of opinion that the unfortunate subject of their doubts had been lured into some low infamous den, by persons who had either previously known or suspected that he had a large sum of money in his possession; that here he was plundered, and afterwards either murdered in cold blood, or slain in some desperate struggle to recover his gold. This conjecture was encouraged by but too many corroboratory circumstances: the sailor was of a temper easily persuaded: he had all the recklessness and hardihood of a seafaring man, only increased by the possession of prize-money and the release from hard work: he had money, and a very large sum of money, about him, the greater part in specie, and not in notes, or any security which it would be difficult or dangerous to exchange; all this was known to his brother and to Mr. Wroughton, both eye-witnesses of the fact.

One other circumstance deserves a word. It was, both at the time and for a long period afterwards, a source of bitter although of most groundless self-reproach to Grimaldi, that he could not sufficiently recollect the appearance of the man who accompanied his brother to the stage-door of the theatre, to describe his person. If he could have been traced out, some intelligence respecting the poor fellow might perhaps have been discovered; but Grimaldi was so much moved by the unexpected recognition of his brother, that he scarcely bestowed a thought or a look upon his companion: nor, after taxing his memory for many years, could he ever recollect more than that he was dressed in precisely the same attire as his brother, even down to the white waistcoat; a circumstance which had not only been noticed by himself, but was well remembered by the door-keeper, and others who had passed in and out of the theatre during the time the two young men were standing in the lobby.

Recollecting the intimate terms upon which the two appeared to be, and the appointment which was made between them for the following morning, "at ten precisely," there is little reason to doubt that if the sailor had disappeared without the knowledge or privity of his companion, the latter would infallibly have applied to Grimaldi to know where his brother was. Coupling the fact of his never doing so, and never being seen or heard of again, with the circumstance of the lost man never having evinced the least inclination to take him home with him, to retain him when he was in his brother's company, or even to introduce him in the slightest manner (from all of which it would seem that he was some bad or doubtful character), the family arrived at the conclusion,—if it should ever prove an unjust one, it will be forgiven,—that this man was cognizant of, if indeed he was not chiefly instrumental in bringing about, the untimely fate of the murdered man, for such they always supposed him. Whether they were right or wrong in this conclusion, will probably ever remain unknown.

CHAPTER X.

1803 to 1805.

Bologna and his Family.—An Excursion into Kent with that personage.—Mr. Mackintosh, the gentleman of landed property, and his preserves.—A great day's sporting; and a scene at the Garrick's Head in Bow Street between a Landlord, a' Gamekeeper, Bologna, and Grimaldi.

SIGNORE BOLOGNA, better known to his intimates by the less euphonious title of Jack Bologna, was a countryman of Grimaldi's father, having been, like him, born at Genoa; he had been well acquainted with him, indeed, previously to his coming to England. He arrived in this country, with his wife, two sons, and a daughter, in 1787. The signore was a posture-master, and his wife a slack-wire dancer: John his eldest son (afterwards the well-known Harlequin), Louis his second son, and Barbara the youngest child, were all dancers. They were first engaged at Sadlers Wells, and here an intimacy commenced between Bologna and Grimaldi which lasted during the remainder of their lives; they were children when it commenced, playing about the street in the morning, and at the theatre at night.

The signore and his family remained at Sadlers Wells until 1793, when Mr. Harris engaged him and his children (his wife had died before this time) at Covent Garden, where they remained for several years; Bologna playing during the summer months at the Surrey Circus, as Grimaldi used to act at Sadlers Wells. In 1801 he left Covent Garden, and in 1803 the Circus; upon the conclusion of the latter engagement, he was immediately secured for the ensuing season at Sadlers Wells, where he reappeared on Easter Monday in 1804. During the many years which had passed away since he closed his first engagement at Sadlers Wells, he and Grimaldi had been necessarily prevented by their different occupations from seeing much of each other; but being now once more engaged at the same theatre, their old intimacy was renewed. Their wives becoming attached to each other, and their engagements being pretty much the same, they were constantly at each other's houses or in each other's society. They met with a droll adventure in company which may as well be related in this place.

Drury Lane closed in June and reopened on the 4th of October; but, as usual, Grimaldi's services were not required until Christmas. He had been in great request at Sadlers Wells, for the season was one of the heaviest the performers had ever known. The two friends were speaking of this one evening and complaining of their great fatigue, when Bologna recalled to mind that he had a friend residing in Kent who had repeatedly invited him down to his house for a few days' shooting, and to take a friend with him: he proposed therefore that he and Grimaldi should go down by way of relaxation. On the 6th of November, accordingly, the friend having been previously apprised of their intention, and having again returned a most pressing invitation, they left town in a gig hired for the purpose.

On the road, Bologna told his friend that the gentleman whom they were going down to visit was an individual of the name of Mackintosh; that he was understood to be wholly unconnected with any business or profession, that he was a large landed proprietor, and that he had most splendid preserves. The intelligence pleased Grimaldi very much, as he looked forward to a very stylish visit, and felt quite elated with the idea of cultivating the acquaintance of so great a man.

"I have never seen his place myself," said Bologna; "but when he is in London, he is always about the theatres, and he has often asked me to come down and have some shooting."

They were talking thus, when they arrived at Bromley, which was about two miles and a half from the place to which they were bound. Here they met a man in a fustian jacket, driving a tax-cart drawn by a very lame little horse, who suddenly pulling up, hailed the party with a loud "Hallo!" and a "Well, Joe, here you are!"

Grimaldi was rather surprised at this intimate salutation from a stranger; and he was a little more so when Bologna, after shaking hands very heartily with the man in fustian, introduced him as the identical Mr. Mackintosh whom they were going down to visit.

"I'm glad to see you, Joe," said Mr. Mackintosh with an air of patronage. "I thought I'd meet you here and show you the way."

Grimaldi made some suitable acknowledgments for this politeness, and the tax-cart and the gig went on together.

"I am sorry to say you have hit upon a bad day for coming down here, so far as the shooting goes," said Mackintosh, "for to-morrow is a general fast. At any rate, you can walk about and look at the country; and the next day—the next day—won't we astonish the natives!"

"Are there plenty of birds this year?" inquired Bologna.

"Lots—lots," replied the other man, whose manner and appearance scarcely bore out Grimaldi's preconceived notion of the gentleman they were going to visit. If he were already surprised, however, he had much greater cause to be so eventually.

After travelling upwards of two miles, Bologna inquired if they were not near their place of destination.

"Certainly," answered Mackintosh: "that is my house."

Looking in the direction pointed out, their eyes were greeted with the appearance of a small roadside public-

house, in front of which hung a signboard, bearing the words "Good entertainment for man and beast" painted on it, and beneath the name of "Mackintosh." Bologna looked at Grimaldi, and then at the public-house, and then at the man in the fustian jacket; but he was far too much engaged in contemplating with evident satisfaction the diminutive dwelling they were approaching, to regard the surprise of his companions. "Yes," he said, "that house contains the best of wines, ales, beds, tobacco, stabling, skittle-grounds, and every other luxury."

"I beg your pardon," interposed Bologna, who was evidently mortified, while Grimaldi had a strong and almost irresistible inclination to laugh, "but I thought you were not connected with business at all?"

"No more I am," said Mackintosh with a wink: "the business belongs to mother!"

Bologna looked inexpressibly annoyed, and Grimaldi laughed outright, at which Mr. Mackintosh seemed rather pleased than otherwise, taking it to all appearance quite complimentary. "Yes," he said, "I may be said to be a gentleman at large, for I do nothing but ride about in my carriage here," pointing to the tax-cart, "or stroll out with my gun or my fishing-rod. Mother's quite a woman of business; but as I'm an only child, I suppose I shall have to look after it myself some day or other."

He remained silent a moment, and then said, touching Bologna smartly with his whip, "I suppose, old fellow, you didn't think you were coming to a public-house, —eh?"

"Indeed I did not," was the sulky reply.

"Ah! I thought you'd be surprised," said Mackintosh with a hearty laugh. "I never let my London friends know who or what I am, except they're very particular friends, like you and Joe, for instance. I just lead them to guess I'm a great man, and there I leave 'em. What does it matter what other ideas strangers have about one?—But here we are, so get out of your gig; and rest assured you shall have as hearty a welcome as you'll ever get at a nobleman's house."

There was something hearty and pleasant in the man's manner, despite his coarseness; so, finding that Bologna was not inclined to speak, Grimaldi said something civil himself, which was extremely well received by their host, who shook his hand warmly, and led them into the house, where, being introduced to Mrs. Mackintosh by her son as particular friends of his, they were received with great hospitality, and shortly afterwards sat down in the little bar to a capital plain dinner, which, in conjunction with some sparkling ale, rather tended to soothe the wounded spirit of Bologna.

After dinner they walked about the neighbourhood, which was all very pleasant, and returning to supper, were treated with great hospitality. On retiring to rest, Bologna acknowledged that "matters might have been worse," but, before pronouncing a final opinion, prudently waited to ascertain how the preserves would turn out. On the following day, they divided their time pretty equally between eating, drinking, chatting with the chance customers of the house, their host and his mother, and, though last not least, preparing their guns for the havoc which they purposed making the next morning in the preserves of Mr. Mackintosh, of which preserves he still continued to speak in terms of the highest praise.

Accordingly, they met at the breakfast table a full hour earlier than on the previous day, and having despatched a hearty meal, sallied forth, accompanied by Mr. Mackintosh, who declined carrying a gun, and contented himself with showing the way. Having walked some little distance, they came to a stile, which they climbed over, and after traversing a plot of pasture-land, arrived at a gate, beyond which was a field of fine buckwheat. Here the guide called a halt.

"Wait a minute!—wait a minute!" cried he; "you are not so much accustomed to sporting as I."

They stopped. He advanced to the gate, looked over, and hastily returned.

"Now's the time!" he said, eagerly; "there's lots of birds in that field!" They crept very cautiously onwards; but when they reached the gate and saw beyond it, were amazed to discern nothing but an immense quantity of pigeons feeding in the field.

"*There's* a covey!" said Mackintosh, admiringly.

"A covey!" exclaimed Grimaldi. "Where? I see nothing but pigeons!"

"Nothing but pigeons!" exclaimed Mackintosh, contemptuously. "What did you expect to find? Nothing but pigeons!—Well!"

"I expected to find pheasants and partridges," answered both sportsmen together. Bologna, upon whom the sulks were again beginning to fall, gave a grunt of disapprobation; but Mackintosh either was, or pretended to be, greatly surprised.

"Pheasants and partridges!" he exclaimed, with a ludicrous expression of amazement. "Oh, dear, quite out of the question! I invited you down here to shoot birds—and pigeons are birds; and there are the pigeons; —shoot away, if you like. I have performed my part of the agreement. Pheasants and partridges!" he repeated: "most extraordinary!"

"The fellow's a humbug!" whispered Bologna: "kill as many of his pigeons as you can."

With this understanding, Bologna fired at random into the nearest cluster of pigeons, and Grimaldi fired upon them as they rose frightened from the ground. The slaughter was very great: they picked up twenty in that field, five in the one beyond, and saw besides several fall which they could not find. This great success, and the agreeable employment of picking up the birds, restored their equanimity of temper, and all went well for some time, until Mackintosh said inquiringly,

"I think you have them all now?"

"I suppose we have," replied Bologna: "at least, all except those which we saw fall among the trees yonder."

"Those you will not be able to get," said Mackintosh.

"Very good: such being the case, we have 'em all," returned Bologna.

"Very well," said Mackintosh, quietly: "and now, if you will take my advice, you will cut away at once."

"Cut away!" said Bologna.

"Cut away!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"Cut away is the word!" repeated Mr. Mackintosh.

"And why, pray?" asked Bologna.

"Why?" said Mr. Mackintosh. "Isn't the reason obvious?—Because you've killed the pigeons."

"But what has our killing these pigeons to do with cutting away?"

"Bless us!" cried Mackintosh, "you are not very bright to day! Don't you see that when the squire comes to hear of it, he'll be very angry. Now, what can be plainer, if he's very angry, as I know he will be, than that if you are here he'll put you in prison? Don't you stand that. No, no; what I say is, cut away at once, and don't stop for him to catch you."

"Pooh!" said Bologna, with a contemptuous air, "I see you know nothing of the law. There's not a squire in all England who has power to put us in prison, merely because we have killed your pigeons, although we may not have taken out certificates."

"*My* pigeons!" exclaimed Mackintosh. "Lord help you! they're none o' mine!—they belong to the squire, and very fond of them he is, and precious savage he'll be when he finds out how you have been peppering them. So there I come back again to what I set out with. If you two lads will take my advice, now you've got your pigeons, you'll cut away with them."

The remarkable disclosure contained in this little speech fairly overwhelmed them; they stared at each other in stupid surprise, which shortly gave way first to anger, and then to fear. They were greatly awed at contemplating the risk which they had incurred of being "sent to prison;" and after a few words of angry remonstrance addressed to Mr. Mackintosh, which that gentleman heard with a degree of composure and philosophy quite curious to behold, they concluded that they had better act upon his advice and "cut away" at once.

They lost no time in returning to the inn; and here, while they were engaged in packing up the "birds," the singular host got a nice luncheon ready, of which they did not fail to partake, and then mounting their gig, they bade farewell to him and his mother, the former of whom at parting appeared so much delighted, and vented so many knowing winks, that for very life they could not help laughing outright.

On the following morning, Bologna and Grimaldi encountered each other by chance in Covent Garden. Grimaldi had been to Drury Lane to see if he were wanted, and Bologna had been into the Strand, in which, during the winter months, when he was not engaged at any theatre, he had an exhibition. They laughed heartily at meeting, as the recollection of the day previous and its adventures came upon them, and finally adjourned to the Garrick's Head, in Bow Street, to have a glass of sherry and a biscuit, and once more talk the matter over. The house was then kept by a man of the name of Spencer, who had formerly been Harlequin at Drury Lane, but who, having left the profession, had turned Boniface instead. He was standing at the door when they arrived, and all three being upon intimate

terms, was invited to join in a glass of wine: to this he readily assented, and they adjourned to his private room, where the Kentish adventures were related, to his great amusement and pleasure.

"By-the-bye, though," he said, when the merriment was pretty well over, "I wish you had happened to mention to me that you wanted a few days' shooting, for I could have procured that for you with the greatest ease. I was born at Hayes, and all my relatives live in Kent; besides, I know pretty well every gamekeeper in the county;—in fact, when in town, they invariably come to this house, and would have been delighted to have obliged any friend of mine."

"Ah!" said Bologna, "and in that case we should have had birds to shoot at and not pigeons."

Here Mr. Spencer indulged in a laugh, which was interrupted by the entrance of a young man who, though unknown to Bologna and Grimaldi, appeared well acquainted with the landlord, who, after shaking him warmly by the hand and bidding him be seated, said, "But, Joseph, what has brought you so suddenly to town?"

"Oh, drat it!" exclaimed the new-comer, "a very disagreeable business indeed. There were two vagabonds down in our parts yesterday from London, and they killed and stole fifty or sixty of master's pigeons. I've come up here to find them out and apprehend them: I've got a constable drinking in the tap."

This information rather flustered them, and Bologna turned as pale as death; but the host, after indulging in two winks and one fit of reflection, quietly said,

"Well, but, Joseph, how can you find them out, think you? London's a large place, Joseph."

"Why, I'll tell you," replied the gamekeeper, for such, as they afterwards discovered, he was. "I found out that the rascals had been staying at Mrs. Mackintosh's house, and were friends of her son; so I went to him last night and asked him where the fellows were. 'Oh,' says he, 'I know what you've come about: they've cut away with them pigeons!' 'Yes,' says I; 'and unless you tell me where they've cut away to, I shall make you answerable.' 'Oh,' says he again, 'I know nothing about 'em; they're no friends of mine,' he says, 'they're only play-actors: one's a Clown and t'other's a Harlequin at one of the London theatres.' And this was all I could get from him; so up I came this morning, and knowing that you were acquainted with theatrical people, I thought I'd come and ask you which of the Clowns and which of the Harlequins it was most likely to be."

"Is the squire very angry?" asked Spencer.

"Oh, very," responded Joseph, with a shake of the head: "he's determined to pursue them to the very extremity of the law."

Upon hearing this, Grimaldi was much troubled in mind; not that he thought Spencer was a man likely to betray his friends, but fearing that by some inadvertence he might disclose what he felt certain his will would prompt him to conceal. As to Bologna, his agitation was alone sufficient to announce the real state of the fact; for, in addition to a ghastly paleness which overspread his face, he trembled so much, that in an attempt to convey some wine to his lips, he deposited it upon his knees and left it there, staring all the while at the gamekeeper with a most crest-fallen visage.

"There's one thing the squire appears to have forgotten," said Spencer, "and that is simply this—that before he can pursue these fellows to the extremity of the law, he has got to find them."

"True," answered Joseph; "and unless you assist me, I'm afraid I shan't be able to do that. I suppose, now, there are a good many Clowns and Harlequins in London,—eh?"

"A great many," replied Spencer. "I am one, for instance."

"Oh!" smiled the gamekeeper, "but it isn't you."

"That's true," said the host composedly. "But I'll tell you what; it is two particular friends of mine, though, who did it!"

Joseph exclaimed, "Indeed!" and Bologna gave Grimaldi a look which clearly evidenced his conviction, firstly, that it was all up, and secondly, that it was impossible to "cut away."

"Friends of yours—hey?" said Joseph, ruminating. "Then I expect you won't assist me in finding them out?"

"Not a bit of it," answered Spencer, "so you may go and look among the Harlequins and Clowns yourself: and Heaven help you! for the jokes they will play and the tricks they will serve you will be enough to wear your heart out."

Joseph looked greatly mortified at this compassionate speech, and, after a moment's pause, stammered out something about "that being Mr. Spencer's friends, it made a great difference."

"I'll tell you what it is, Joseph," said the landlord; "say no more about this affair, and my two friends will pay a reasonable sum for the pigeons, and stand a rump-steak dinner and a bottle of wine this very day. What say you?"

Joseph's countenance brightened up. "Oh!" said he, "as to the pigeons, of course I could manage. If the gentlemen are friends of yours, consider the matter settled,—I'll talk the squire over about the matter. And as to the steak and wine, why I don't mind partaking of them; and, in return, they shall come down into Kent some day next week, and *I'll* give them a morning's shooting."

"Then," said Spencer, rising formally, "these are the gentlemen. Gentlemen, this is Mr. Joseph Clarke."

All was satisfactorily settled: the rump-steak and wine were ordered, duly eaten and drunk, and they spent the afternoon together very jovially, accepting Mr. Clarke's invitation for another "day's shooting" with great alacrity;—nor did they omit keeping the appointment, but, on the day fixed, went once more into Kent, when, under the able guidance of their new acquaintance, they succeeded in killing and bagging four hares and five brace of pheasants in less than two hours.

They returned to town without seeing anything more of their friend Mr. Mackintosh, but being upon the very best terms with Mr. Joseph Clarke, who, but for his really keeping his word and giving them a day's sport, might be not unreasonably suspected of having been in league with the landlord to use the sportsmen for their joint amusement, and to extract a good dinner from them besides.

At Drury Lane no novelty was brought out until the holidays. John Kemble had left the theatre on the termination of the previous season, and had become a proprietor of the other house, by purchasing the share in the establishment which had previously belonged to Mr. W. Lewis. He became acting manager at once; Mr. Wroughton succeeding to his (Mr. Kemble's) old situation at Drury Lane.

In January 1805, they brought out at Drury a most miserable specimen of a pantomime called Harlequin's Fireside, which, contrary to the expectations of the company, ran till the following Easter, and was received, to their great amazement, with considerable applause. Mr. T. Dibdin, to whom Grimaldi expressed his surprise at its reception, admitted the poverty of the piece, and observed that the abilities of the actors had alone occasioned its success. Grimaldi says it was very kind of him to say so, and thinks that perhaps it might be. It is by no means improbable, for similar results are not unfrequent now-a-days.

Sadlers Wells reopened, as usual, at Easter 1805; Grimaldi and Bologna were again engaged, and the season was a very profitable one. When "Harlequin's Fireside" had ceased running, he did not play at Drury above half a dozen times during the rest of the season. The theatre closed in June, and reopened again on the 21st of September, the performances being Othello and Lodoiska, in which latter piece Grimaldi, his wife, and mother, all appeared.

On the conclusion of the night's amusements, he had an interview with the acting manager, which, although at first both pleasing and profitable, led in less than six weeks to his departure from the theatre at which he had originally appeared, and in which he had constantly played, with all possible success, for nearly four-and-twenty years.

CHAPTER XI.

1805 to 1806.

Stage Affairs and Stage Quarrels.—Mr. Graham, the Bow Street Magistrate and Drury Lane Manager.—Mr. Peake.—Grimaldi is introduced to Mr. Harris by John Kemble.—Leaves Drury Lane Theatre and engages at Covent Garden.—Mortification of the Authorities at "the other House."—He joins Charles Dibdin's Company and visits Dublin.—The *wet* Theatre.—Ill success of the speculation, and great success of his own Benefit.—Observations on the comparative strength of Whisky Punch and Rum Punch, with interesting experiments

THE manager of Drury Lane had advertised Tobin.'s

comedy of "The Honey Moon" as the play for the second night of the season: not recollecting, until it was too late to alter the bills, that in consequence of the secession of Mr. Byrne, who had been ballet-master, and the non-engagement of any other person in his place, there was no one to arrange the dance incidental to the piece. In this dilemma, Grimaldi, who had been accustomed to arrange the dances at Sadlers Wells, was sent for, and, as soon as Lodoiska was over, the interview took place between him and the manager to which reference was made at the close of the last chapter.

Mr. Wroughton, after stating that he was in a very unexpected dilemma, and that unless Grimaldi would assist him he would have to change the piece for the ensuing night—which it was exceedingly desirable to avoid doing, if possible—briefly narrated the circumstances in which the theatre was placed, and concluded by offering him two pounds per week in addition to his regular salary, if he would arrange the dance in question, and assist in getting up any other little dances and processions that might be required. This offer he readily accepted, merely stipulating that the increased salary should be understood to extend over the whole season, and not merely until another ballet-master was engaged. Mr. Wroughton observed, that nothing could be fairer, that this was what he meant, and that Grimaldi had his instructions to engage as many male dancers as he might deem necessary. He at once entered upon his new office; immediately engaged as many hands (or legs) as he required, arranged the dance during the night, called a rehearsal of it at ten in the morning, got it into a perfect state by twelve, rehearsed it again in its proper place in the comedy, and at night had the satisfaction of hearing it encored with great applause.

At the end of the week, he received his increased salary from Mr. Peake, the treasurer, a gentleman well known and highly respected by all connected with the stage or theatrical literature, who shook him by the hand, congratulated him on this new improvement of his income, and cordially wished him success.

Before he accepted the money, he said, "My dear sir, to prevent any future difference, it is thoroughly understood, is it, that this increase is for the season?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Peake: "I will show you, if you like, Mr. Graham's written order to me to that effect." This he did, and Grimaldi of course was perfectly satisfied. Mr. Graham, who was then a magistrate at Bow Street, was at the head of affairs at Drury Lane.

All went on well for some little time. Mr. James D'Egville was engaged as ballet-master shortly afterwards; but this made no alteration in the footing upon which Grimaldi was placed. There was no difference of opinion between the ballet-master and himself, for he continued to arrange the minor dances and processions, and his arrangements were repeatedly very warmly commended by Mr. D'Egville.

A new grand ballet, called Terpsichore, was produced by the latter gentleman immediately after his joining the company, in which Grimaldi performed "Pan," which he always considered a capital character and one of the best he ever had to play. The ballet was got up to bring forward Madame Parisot, who was engaged for the season, for one thousand guineas. It was thoroughly rehearsed, at least fourteen times before the night of performance, was very favourably received, and had a good run.

He was not a little surprised, on Saturday the 26th of October, when he went as usual to the treasury to draw his salary, to hear that thenceforth the extra two pounds would not be paid. Mr. Peake admitted that he was also very much surprised and annoyed at the circumstance, again producing Mr. Graham's letter, and candidly acknowledging, that in his opinion this uncalled-for attempt to rescind the contract, which was none of Grimaldi's seeking, was very paltry. He immediately waited upon Mr. Wroughton and mentioned the circumstance, at which he too appeared greatly vexed, although it was not in his power to order the additional sum to be paid. He then mentioned the circumstance to his wife, dwelling upon it with great irritation; but she, observing that it was of no consequence, for they could do very well without it, proposed that, having nothing to do at Drury Lane that night, they should go for an hour or two to Covent Garden.

To this proposition he made no objection; so, as he passed down Bow Street, he called in upon Mr. T. Dibdin for an order, and the conversation happening naturally enough to turn upon theatrical affairs, mentioned what had just occurred at Drury Lane. Mr. Dibdin immediately expressed himself in very strong terms upon the subject, and counselled Grimaldi to withdraw from the theatre, and to accept an engagement at the other house. The advice generated a long conversation between them, which terminated in Grimaldi saying, Mr. Dibdin might, if he pleased, mention the subject to Mr. Harris, and say, if the Management were willing to engage him, he was willing to enter into articles for the following season.

In the course of the evening, he received a note begging his attendance at Covent Garden on Monday at twelve, and keeping the appointment, was ushered into a room in which were Mr. Harris and John Kemble. The latter greeted him in a very friendly manner, and said,

"Well, Joe, I see you are determined to follow me."

"Yes, sir," replied Grimaldi, who had been thinking of something polite; "you are a living magnet of attraction, Mr. Kemble."

At this, Mr. Harris laughed and congratulated the tragedian on receiving so handsome a compliment. Kemble inquired of Grimaldi whether he knew Mr. Harris, and receiving a reply in the negative, introduced him to that gentleman as "Joe Grimaldi," whose father he had known well, who was a true chip of the old block, and the first low comedian in the country.

Mr. Harris said a great many fine things in reply to these commendations, and, rising, requested Grimaldi to follow him into an adjoining apartment. He did so, and in less than a quarter of an hour had signed articles for five seasons; the terms being, for the first season, six pounds per week; for the second and third, seven pounds; and for the fourth and fifth, eight pounds. Independent of these emoluments, he had several privileges reserved to him, among which, was the very important one of permission to play at Sadlers Wells, as he had theretofore done. These arrangements being concluded, he took his leave, greatly satisfied with the improved position in which he stood, as up to that time he had only received four pounds per week at Drury Lane.

In the evening, he had to play "Pan" in the ballet at Drury. When he had dressed for the part, he entered the green-room, which was pretty full of ladies and gentlemen, among whom was Mr. Graham, who the moment he saw him, inquired if a report that had reached him of Mr. Grimaldi's going to Covent Garden for the following season were correct. Grimaldi replied in the affirmative, adding, that he was engaged at the other house not only for the following season, but for the four ensuing seasons.

Mr. Graham started up in a state of considerable excitement on hearing this, and addressed the performers present at considerable length, expatiating in strong language upon what he termed "Grimaldi's ingratitude" in leaving the theatre. Grimaldi waited patiently until he had concluded, and then, addressing himself to the same auditors, made a counter-statement, in which he recapitulated the whole of the circumstances as they had actually occurred. When he came to mention Mr. Graham's letter to Mr. Peake the treasurer, the former hastily interrupted him by demanding, what letter he referred to.

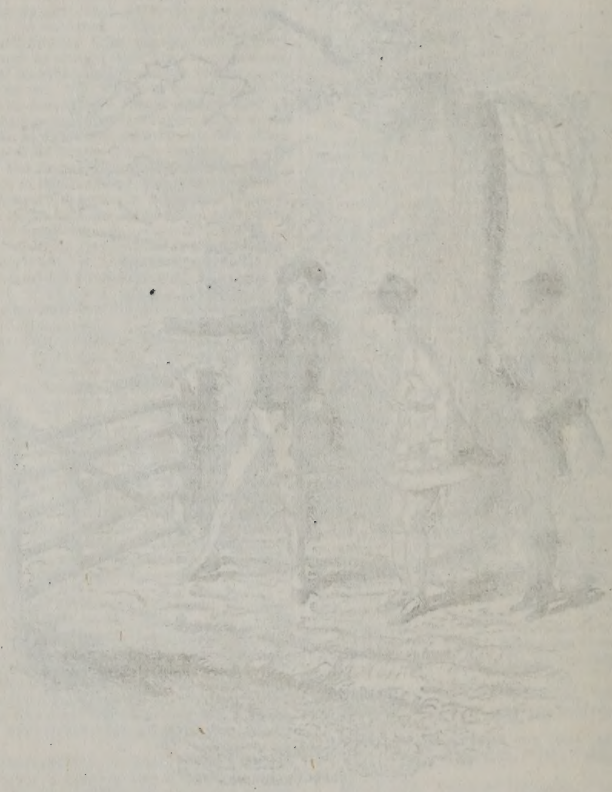
"The letter," replied Grimaldi, "in which you empowered Mr. Peake to pay the increased salary for the whole of the season."

"If Mr. Peake showed you that letter," replied Mr. Graham in a great passion, "Mr. Peake is a fool for his pains."

"Mr. Peake," rejoined Grimaldi, "is a gentleman, sir, and a man of honour, and, I am quite certain, disdains being made a party to any such unworthy conduct as you have pursued towards me."

A rather stormy scene followed, from which Grimaldi came off victorious; Barrymore and others taking up his cause so vigorously, that Mr. Graham at length postponed any further discussion and walked away. Enough having taken place, however, to enable him to foresee that his longer stay at Drury Lane would only be productive of constant discomfort to himself, he gave notice to Mr. Graham on the following morning of his intention to leave the theatre on the ensuing Saturday week. This resolve gave rise to another battle between Mr. Graham and himself, in the course of which he was pleased to say, that he could not play the ballet without him, and, consequently, that if he left, he would bring an action against him for loss incurred by its not being performed. Grimaldi, however, firmly adhered to his original resolution: acting therein upon the advice of

MR. MACKINTOSH'S COVEY. (See p. 46.)



Mr. Hughes, who strenuously counselled him by no means to depart from it.

Considering himself now at perfect liberty until Easter, he entered into an engagement to perform at Astley's theatre in Dublin, which had just been taken for a short period by Messrs. Charles and Thomas Dibdin. These gentlemen had engaged the greater part of the Sadlers Wells company, including Bologna and his wife (who had been engaged by Mr. Harris for the next season at Covent Garden on the same day as Grimaldi himself), and they offered Grimaldi fourteen guineas a week for himself and two for his wife, half a clear benefit at the end of the season, and all his travelling expenses both by land and sea.

On the 5th of November he closed his engagement at Drury Lane, performing "Pan," in the ballet of Terpsichore. He started on the following morning, accompanied by his wife, for Dublin, leaving his little son, who was in very weak health, at home. They had a very tedious journey to Holyhead, and a very stormy one from thence to Dublin, experiencing the usual troubles from cold, sickness, fatigue, and otherwise, by the way. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dibdin, who had arrived first, received them with much cordiality and kindness; and they took lodgings at the house of a Mr. Davis, in Peter Street.

On Monday, November the 18th, the theatre opened, and their career was for some time eminently successful —as long, indeed, as the fine weather lasted; but no sooner did the rainy weather set in, than the manager discovered, to his horror and surprise, that the roof of the theatre, being in a dilapidated condition, was not water-proof. At length, one night towards the end of December, a very heavy rain coming down during the performances, actually drove the audience out of the house. The water descended in torrents into the pit and boxes: some people who were greatly interested in the performances put up their umbrellas, and others put on great-coats and shawls; but at length it came down so heavily upon the stage, that the performers themselves were obliged to disappear. In a few minutes the stage was covered, the scenery soaked through, the pit little better than a well, and the boxes and gallery streaming with water.

This unforeseen occurrence threw both literally and figuratively a damp upon the performances which there was no recovering. From that time, with the single exception of one evening, the theatre was deserted. Tarpaulings and all kinds of cheap remedies were tried, but they all failed in producing their intended effect. They never kept the water out, or drew the company in. As to any thorough repair of the roof, it was wholly out of the question; for the Dibdins only held the theatre until March, and the necessary repairs under this head alone would have cost at the very least 200l.

In this state of things, Mr. Charles Dibdin was compelled to write to London for remittances whe rewith to pay his company. Knowing exactly how he was situated, Grimaldi volunteered his services in the only way in which he could render them, and offered not to send to the treasury for his salary, but to leave it to be paid whenever the manager might appoint after their return to London. This offer, it is almost unnecessary to add, was gratefully accepted.

About the middle of January, Mr. Jones, the manager of the Crow Street Theatre, hearing how badly the Astley's people were doing, and yet finding that, bad as their business was, it injured his, made an offer to Mr. Dibdin to take his company off his hands at the terms upon which he had originally engaged them, and for the remainder of the time specified in their articles, and further to make some pecuniary compensation to Mr. Dibdin himself. The manager assembled the company on the stage, after their having had the mortification of playing to an empty house, on Tuesday, January the 28th, and communicated this offer to them, and earnestly urged upon them the acceptance of the proposal, as the only means by which himself and his brother could hope to recover any portion of the losses they had already sustained. Grimaldi at once expressed his readiness to accede to the proposition, and used his utmost influence with the other members of the company to induce them to do the like. He succeeded, except in the case of two of the performers, who preferred returning at once to England.

When this was arranged to the satisfaction of all parties, Mr. Dibdin announced his intention to close the theatre on the next Saturday, February the 1st. Grimaldi took the opportunity of inquiring what was to become of his half-benefit which had been agreed upon. The manager replied, with a melancholy smile, that he might give him anything he liked for *his* half—twenty pounds would do, and he should have the entire house next Saturday. Grimaldi immediately paid the twenty pounds, and on the following morning commenced making preparations for his benefit, having barely four days in which to announce the performances and sell his tickets.

He had borne an introductory letter to Captain Trench, whose unvarying kindness to him on every possible occasion he most gratefully acknowledged, and to this gentleman he first mentioned his intention of taking a benefit. He also mentioned it to his landlord. Their replies were characteristic.

"Let me have a hundred box-tickets," said Captain Trench: "keep the two centre boxes for me. If I want any more tickets, I'll send for them: but here's the money for the hundred."

"Give me a hundred pit-tickets," said the landlord. "If I can sell more, I will: but here is the money for them."

He had his bills printed and well circulated, but did no more business until the Saturday morning, which made him uneasy; though the fact simply was, that the people were waiting to see how the weather would turn out: very well knowing that if it were a wet night, the theatre would be the very worst place in which to encounter the rain. Fortune, however, was propitious: the day was cloudless, fair, and beautiful; and the result was, that after having at nine o'clock in the morning not one place taken except the two boxes bespoken by Captain Trench, at one o'clock in the afternoon not a single place remained unlet. At one time, when there was no doubt of the weather remaining dry, there were no fewer than sixteen carriages standing before his door, the owners of which were all anxious to obtain places, and all of whom he was reluctantly compelled to disappoint.

The receipts of the house amounted to one hundred and ninety-seven pounds nineteen shillings, not to mention a variety of presents, including a magnificent gold snuff-box, from Captain Trench, which was worth, in weight alone, more than thirty pounds sterling.

This purchase of Dibdin's half of the benefit for twenty pounds was not only a very fortunate thing for Grimaldi, but was, on the other hand, in some degree serviceable to Dibdin also, inasmuch as it enabled Grimaldi to oblige him with a loan of one hundred pounds, of which at that moment, in consequence of his undeserved misfortunes, he stood much in need. This advance, together with salary due and other matters, left Mr. Dibdin indebted to Grimaldi in the sum of one hundred and ninety-six pounds, the whole of which was honourably repaid a few months afterwards.

This benefit closed the season of the "wet" Theatre in Peter Street; and on the following Monday, Grimaldi and the greater part of the London company appeared at the Crow Street Theatre, where they acted until the 29th of March. One circumstance is sufficient to show that the performances were unusually successful, which is, that the two pieces in which he came out,—namely, "Harlequin Esop," and "Coa and Zoa, or the Rival Indians,"—were found quite attractive enough for the whole period. He did not appear in any other part, even for a single night, during the whole of his engagement.

On Sunday, March the 30th, they packed up, and at ten o'clock in the evening of Monday went on board the packet in which they had taken their berths to Holyhead, after receiving the warmest and kindest hospitality from every person they had encountered in Dublin. With only one letter of introduction, Grimaldi had found himself in the course of a few days surrounded by friends whose hospitality and cordiality, not only of profession, but of action, were beyond all bounds. One would invite him to dinner, and be personally affronted by his not dining with him every day; another who wished to pay him a similar attention, but whose dinner-hour would have interfered with the rehearsal, only gave up his claim upon the condition that his wife and himself should dine with him every Sunday; a third placed a jaunting-car at his disposal, and sent it to his door at eleven o'clock every morning; and a fourth expected him to meet a small party at supper regularly every night. He had heard and read a great deal of Irish hospitality, but had formed no conception of its extent and heartiness until he experienced its effects in his own person.

He was much struck, as most Englishmen are, by the enormous consumption of whisky-punch, and the facility

with which the good folks of Dublin swallow tumbler after tumbler of it, without any visible symptoms of intoxication. He entertained a theory that some beverage of equal strength, to which they were unaccustomed, would be as trying to them as their whisky-punch was to him, (for he was always afraid of a second tumbler of toddy,) and, with a view of putting it to the proof, gave a little party at his lodgings on Twelfth Night, and compounded some good strong English rum-punch, with rather more than a dash of brandy in it. He considers that the experiment was eminently successful, asserting that one-fourth of the quantity which the guests would have drunk with complete impunity, had it been their ordinary beverage, quite overset them; and states with great glee, that Mr. Davis, his landlord, who could drink his seven tumblers of whisky-punch and go to bed afterwards rather dull from excessive sobriety, was carried up stairs after one tumbler of the new composition, decidedly drunk. We are inclined to think, however, that Mr. Davis had been taking a few tumblers of whisky-punch in his own parlour before he went up stairs, to qualify himself for the party, and that the success of the experiment is not sufficiently well established to justify us in impressing it on the public mind without the addition of this trifling qualification.

CHAPTER XII.

1806 to 1807.

He returns to town, gets frozen to the roof of a coach on the road, and pays his rent twice over when he arrives at home.—Mr. Charles Farley.—His first appearance at Covent Garden.—Valentine and Orson.—Production of Mother Goose, and its immense success.—The mysterious Adventure of the Six Ladies and the Six Gentlemen.

THEY were six days getting back to London, the weather being very inclement, and the travelling very indifferent. Through a mistake of the booking-office keeper, Grimaldi had to travel the earlier portion of the road from Holyhead outside the coach. The cold was so intense and the frost so severe, that he actually got frozen to his seat; and when the coach arrived at Red Landford, it was with some difficulty that he was lifted off, and conveyed into an inn in a complete state of exhaustion and helplessness. His feet were bathed in brandy, and various other powerful stimulants applied with the view of restoring suspended circulation, but several hours elapsed before he recovered, and it was not until the following morning that he was enabled to resume his journey towards London, where he at length arrived without further hindrance or accident.

He had no sooner returned to town than an unpleasant circumstance occurred, as if in especial illustration of his often-urged remark, that he never had a sum of money but some unforeseen demand was made upon him, or some extraordinary exigency arose.

He had been one morning to the City on business, and was somewhat amazed upon his return to find a broker and his assistant in the best parlour, engaged in coolly taking an inventory of his goods and chattels.

"What on earth is the meaning of this?" he inquired.

"Only an execution for rent," replied the broker, continuing his instructions to his amanuensis: "Mirror in gilt frame, William."

The tenant replied that it was quite impossible, and searching among his papers, found and produced the receipt for his rent.

The broker looked it over with a cheerful smile, and then, with many legal phrases, proceeded to apprise him that the landlord himself was but a lessee, and that, in consequence of his not having paid his rent, the head landlord had determined to seize upon whatever property was found upon the premises.

Greatly annoyed at this information, he hurried to Mr. Hughes, his constant adviser in all difficulties, to consult with him. Having narrated the affair, Mr. Hughes asked what was the amount claimed.

"Eighty-four pounds."

"Well then, Joe," said he, "you must pay it or lose your furniture."

Accordingly he returned home very indignant, and handed over the specified sum to the broker, who said nothing could be more satisfactory, and walked away accompanied by his assistant.

The next morning the landlord came, and being ushered in, expressed much trouble in his countenance, and said that he was very glad to see Mr. Grimaldi and such a fine morning together.

"But I beg your pardon," he added; "I don't think you know me."

Grimaldi replied, that unless he was the gentleman who had imposed upon him the necessity of paying his rent twice over, he had not the pleasure of his acquaintance. At which remark the landlord assumed a very penitent and disconsolate visage, declared his sorrow for what had occurred, and, as some slight reparation for the loss and wrong, proposed to assign the lease to him. Grimaldi under all the circumstances was extremely glad to accede to the proposal, and cheerfully paid all the legal expenses contingent upon the transfer.

The upshot of the matter was, that, a very short time afterwards, he received another communication from the same landlord, in which he imparted the very unexpected fact, that either party to the lease had a discretionary power of cancelling it at that period if he thought proper, and that he intended to avail himself of the clause, unless indeed Mr. Grimaldi would prefer retaining the house at an advanced rent, which he was at liberty to do if he pleased. An inspection of the deed proved but too clearly that this statement was correct; so the eighty-four pounds were lost, together with the legal charges for the assignment of the lease and the costs of the execution, and the burden of an increased rent was imposed upon the unlucky tenant into the bargain.

His old articles at Sadlers Wells expiring this year, he entered into a fresh engagement, under which he bound himself to that theatre for three years, at a weekly salary of twelve pounds and two clear benefits. The pantomime produced at Easter was entitled "Harlequin and the Forty Virgins," and proved remarkably successful, running indeeed through the whole of the season. In this piece he sang a song called "Me and my Neddy," which afterwards became highly popular and was in everybody's mouth. Several presents were made to him by admirers of his performance, and, among others, a very handsome watch, the face of which was so contrived as to represent a portrait of himself in the act of singing the romantic ditty just mentioned.

All this season the pantomime was played first, which arrangement released him at half-past eight o'clock, thus affording him an opportunity, which he enjoyed for the first time in his life, of being abroad in the evening, in the spring and summer of the year. During the greater portion of his life in those seasons, he had entered Sadlers Wells every night at six o'clock, and remained there until twelve. The novelty of being at liberty before it was yet dark was so great, that he scarcely knew what to do with himself, sometimes strolling about the streets in perfect astonishment at finding himself there, and then turning home in pure lack of employment.

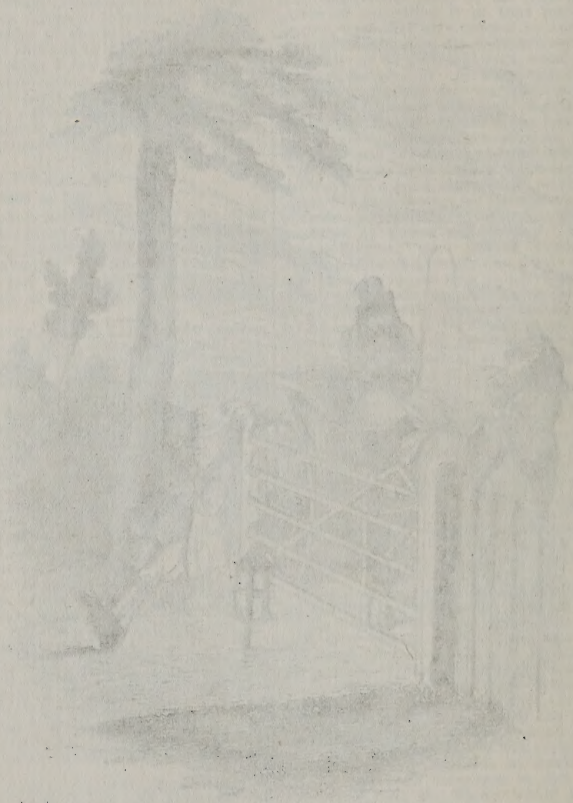
On the opening of Covent Garden Theatre in October, he became first acquainted with Mr. Farley, between whom and himself a very warm and sincere friendship ever after existed. This gentleman inquired in what character he would wish to make his first appearance. He mentioned Scaramouch in Don Juan, which had been one of his most successful parts at the other house; but Mr. Farley suggested Orson, in Valentine and Orson, urging that the drama, which had not been acted for several years, had been very popular with the town, and that Orson was a character well suited to his abilities, in which it was very probable he would make a great hit. Grimaldi at once consented to play the part, merely requesting that Mr. Farley would be good enough to give him some instruction in it, as he had never seen any portion of the piece and was at some loss how to study the character. Mr. Farley readily agreed to do so, and faithfully kept his word.

It has been sometimes said, and indeed stated in print, that Grimaldi was a pupil and copyist of Dubois. No greater mistake can be made: if he can be said to have been the pupil of anybody, Mr. Farley was certainly his master, as he not only took infinite pains to instruct him in the character of Orson, but afterwards gave him very valuable advice and great assistance in getting up many other parts, in which he was also highly successful.

He was very anxious about his first appearance at Covent Garden, and studied Orson with great assiduity and application for some time. He made his first appearance in the character on the 10th of October 1806, Farley playing Valentine. The piece, which was revived with most decided success, was acted nearly every night until the production of the pantomime at Christmas rendered its withdrawal imperative.

The part of Orson was in Grimaldi's opinion the most

LIKE MASTER LIKE MAN. (See p. 63.)



difficult he ever had to play; the multitude of passions requiring to be portrayed, and the rapid succession in which it was necessary to present them before the spectators, involving an unusual share both of mental and physical exertion upon the part of the performer. He played this character both in town and country on many occasions, but the effect produced upon him by the exertions of the last scene of the first act was always the same. As soon as the act-drop fell, he would stagger off the stage into a small room behind the prompter's box, and there sinking into an arm-chair, give full vent to the emotions which he found it impossible to suppress. He would sob and cry aloud, and suffer so much from violent and agonizing spasms, that those about him, accustomed as they at length became to the distressing scene, were very often in doubt, up to the very moment of his being "called," whether he would be able to go upon the stage for the second act. He never failed, however; extraordinary as his sufferings were, his fear of not being ready as the time for his call approached, and the exertions he made to conquer those painful feelings, invariably enabled him to rally at the necessary time,—a curious instance of the power of habit in enabling him to struggle successfully with the weaknesses which no length of habit, and no repetition of the same part, however frequent, were sufficient to banish.

The effect produced on the audience by his personation of this character was intense; it enhanced his reputation greatly, bringing him before the public in quite a new line. The compliments and congratulations which he received from persons ranking high in his own profession, in literature, and in the fine arts, bore high testimony to the merit and striking character of this singular performance.

Preparations now began to be made for the production of "Mother Goose," destined to acquire a degree of popularity quite unprecedented in the history of pantomime, and to occupy a place in the choicest recollections of the play-goers of the time.

At Drury Lane, the Management, well knowing that great preparations were making at Covent Garden for the production of a new harlequinade on the 26th of December, and dreading the advantage they had gained in securing Grimaldi, hurried on the preparations for their own pantomime, and engaging Montgomery, who had acquired some celebrity at the Circus, at a high salary, to play Clown, produced their pantomime on the 23rd, thus gaining an advantage of three days over the other house. The piece, however, partook infinitely more of the character of a spectacle than a pantomime: the scenery and tricks were good, but the "business," as it is technically termed, was so wretched, that the audience began to hiss before it was half over, and eventually grew so clamorous, that it was deemed prudent to drop the curtain, long before the intended conclusion of the piece. Grimaldi and his friend Bologna were present, and were very far from regretting this failure. Up to that time Drury Lane had always been more successful in pantomime than the other house; and there is little doubt, that the production of this unsuccessful but very splendid piece, three days before the usual time, was intended not merely to crush the pantomime in preparation at Covent Garden, but Grimaldi too, if possible.

They had a night rehearsal of "Mother Goose" on the ensuing evening, and the performers were in a state of great anxiety and uncertainty as to its fate. It had always been the custom to render a pantomime the vehicle for the display of gorgeous scenery and splendid dresses; on the last scene especially, the energies of every person in the theatre connected with the decoration of the stage were profusely lavished, the great question with the majority of the town being which pantomime had the finest conclusion. Mother Goose had none of these accessories; it had neither gorgeous processions, nor gaudy banners, nor splendid scenery, nor showy dresses. There was not even a spangle used in the piece, with the exception of those which decked the Harlequin's jacket, and even they would have been dispensed with but for Grimaldi's advice. The last scene too was as plain as possible, and the apprehensions of the performers were proportionately rueful.

But all these doubts were speedily set at rest; for on the production of the pantomime on the 26th of December, 1806, it was received with the most deafening shouts of applause, and played for ninety-two nights, being the whole remainder of the season. The houses it drew were immense; the doors were no sooner open than the theatre was filled: and every time it was played the applause seemed more uproarious than before—another instance of the bad judgment of actors in matters appertaining to their craft. "She Stoops to Conquer" was doomed by the actors to inevitable failure up to the very moment when the performances commenced, (although in this case many eminent literary men and critics of the time held the same opinion;) and "The Honey Moon" lay neglected on the manager's shelf for many years, it being considered impossible that an audience would be found to sit out its representation.

Grimaldi's opinion of Mother Goose—it may or may not be another instance of the bad judgment of actors—always remained pretty much the same, notwithstanding its great success. He considered the pantomime, as a whole, a very indifferent one, and always declared his own part to be one of the worst he ever played; nor was there a trick or situation in the piece to which he had not been well accustomed for many years before. However this may be, there is little doubt that the exertions of Bologna and himself, as Harlequin and Clown, contributed in a very important degree to the success of the piece; it being worthy of remark, that whenever the pantomime has been played without the original Harlequin and Clown, it has invariably gone off flatly, and generally failed to draw.

On the 9th of June he took a benefit in conjunction with Bologna, upon which occasion Mother Goose was played for the eighty-second time. The receipts amounted to 679*l.* 18*s.*

During the run of this pantomime he fell curiously into a new and mysterious circle of acquaintance. The mystery which overhung them, the manner of his introduction, their style of living, and his subsequent discovery of their rank and title, are not a little curious.

On the 6th of January, 1807, a gentleman called at his house in Baynes Row, and desiring to see him, was shown into the parlour. In this person he was surprised to recognise his quondam friend Mackintosh who owned the preserves. He apologised for calling, entered into conversation with great ease, and trusted that the little trick he had played in mere thoughtlessness might be completely forgiven. Being courteously requested not to trouble himself by referring to it, Mr. Mackintosh went on to say, that his mother had sold, not her mangle, but her inn, and had retired to a distant part of the country; while he himself, having attached himself to business, had come to reside permanently in London, and had taken a house and offices in Throgmorton Street, in the City.

Mr. Mackintosh's appearance was extremely smart, his manners were greatly improved, and altogether he had acquired much polish and refinement since the days of the chaise-cart and the fustian jacket. As, notwithstanding the absurd scrape into which he had led his guests, he had treated them very hospitably, Grimaldi invited him to dine on the following Sunday. He came in due course; his conversation was jocose and amusing, and becoming a favourite at the house, he frequently dined or supped there: Grimaldi and his wife occasionally doing the same with him in Throgmorton Street, where he had a very business-looking establishment, plainly but genteelly furnished.

About a month after his first calling, he waited upon Grimaldi one morning, and said that some friends of his residing in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, were very anxious to make his acquaintance, and wished much for his company at supper one evening after he had finished at the theatre. Grimaldi, who if he had accepted all the invitations he received at this period would have had very little time for his profession, parried the request for some time, alleging that he was a very domestic person, and that he preferred adhering to his old custom of supping at home with his wife after the play. Mackintosh, however, urged that his friends were very wealthy people, that he would find them very useful and profitable acquaintances, and by these and a thousand other persuasions overcame his disinclination to go, He consented, and an evening was fixed for the visit.

On the appointed night, as soon as he had finished at the theatre, he called a coach and directed the driver to set him down at the address which Mackintosh had given him. The coach stopped before a very large house, apparently handsomely furnished, and brilliantly lighted up. Not having any idea that the man could possess friends who lived in such style, he at first supposed that the driver had made a mistake; but while they were discussing the point, Mackintosh, elegantly dressed, darted out of the passage, and, taking his arm, conducted him into a brilliant supper-room.

If the outside of the house had given him cause for astonishment, its internal appearance redoubled his surprise. Everything was on a scale of the most costly splendour: the spacious rooms were elegantly papered and gilded, elegant chandeliers depended from the ceilings, the richest carpets covered the floors, and the other furniture, too, was of the most expensive description. The supper comprised a choice variety of luxuries and was splendidly served; the costliest wines of various kinds and vintages sparkled upon the table.

There were just twelve persons in the supper-room, besides Mackintosh and himself: to wit six ladies and six gentlemen, who were all introduced as married people. The first couple to whom he was introduced were of course the host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Farmer, who welcomed him with enchanting urbanity and condescension. Every member of the party was beautifully dressed; the ladies wore jewellery of the most brilliant description, the numerous attendants were in handsome liveries, and the whole scene was so totally different from anything he had anticipated, that he was thoroughly bewildered, and actually began to doubt the reality of what he saw. The politeness of the gentlemen and the graceful ease of the ladies, however, soon restored his self-possession; while the delicious flavour of the wines and dishes convinced him that with respect to that part of the business, at all events, he was labouring under no delusion.

In eating, drinking, singing, and story-telling the night wore on till past five o'clock, when he was at length suffered to return home. A recital of all the circumstances astonished his wife not a little; and he was quite as much amazed at recollecting what he had seen, as she at hearing of it.

A few days afterwards Mackintosh called again; hoped he had enjoyed himself, was delighted to hear he had, and bore an invitation for the next night.

To this Grimaldi urged all the objections he had before mentioned, and added to them an expression of his unwillingness to leave his wife at home. Mr. Mackintosh, with great forethought, had mentioned this in Charlotte Street; he was commissioned to invite her, Mrs. Farmer trusting she would come in a friendly way and excuse the formality of her calling.

Well, there was no resisting this; so Grimaldi and his wife went to Charlotte Street next night, and there were the rooms, and the six ladies and the six gentlemen, and the chandeliers, and the wax-lights, and the liveries, and, what was more to the purpose than all, the supper, all over again.

There were several other parties after this; and then the six ladies and the six gentlemen *would* come and see Mr. Grimaldi at his own house,—whereat Mrs. Grimaldi was rather vexed, inasmuch as they had not one quarter so many spoons as the Charlotte Street people, and no chandeliers at all. However, they were polite enough to say that they had never spent a more delightful evening; and as they talked and laughed very much, and were very friendly and kind, the visit passed off to the admiration of all parties.

There was some mystery about these great friends which the worthy couple were quite unable to solve. It did not appear that they were connected by any other ties than those of friendship, and yet they were always together, and never had a stranger among them; there were always the same six ladies and the same six gentlemen, the only change being in their dresses, which varied in make and colour, but never in quality. Then they did not seem to be in any business; and there was a something in the politeness of the gentlemen and the jocoseness of the ladies which struck them as rather peculiar, although they could never tell what it was. Grimaldi saw that they were not like the noblemen and gentlemen he was in the habit of meeting in the green-rooms of the theatres; and yet, notwithstanding that he pondered upon the matter a great deal, he could not for the life of him discover in what the difference consisted. His wife was in just the same state of perplexity; but although they talked the matter over very often, they never arrived at any tangible conclusion. While they were thinking about it, the parties kept going on, and January and February passed away.

On the 13th of March he had promised to act, in conjunction with Messrs. Bartley, Simmons, Chapman, and Louis Bologna, at the Woolwich Theatre, for the benefit of Mr. Lund. Chancing to mention the circumstance at one of the Charlotte Street parties a few days before the time, Mr. Farmer immediately proposed that he and the other five gentlemen should accompany their excellent friend; that they should all sup together at Woolwich after the theatre was over, and return to town next day. This was immediately agreed to, by all the party except one gentleman, with the uncommon name of Jones, who had an appointment with a nobleman, which it was impossible to postpone.

The five gentlemen were punctual, and they, Mackintosh, and Grimaldi, started together. They dined at Woolwich, and afterwards adjourned to the theatre, where the five gentlemen and Mackintosh went into the boxes, and Grimaldi upon the stage. The five gentlemen talked very loud, and applauded very much; and their magnificent appearance created quite a sensation, not only among the audience, but the actors also. They supped together at the hotel at which they had dined: slept there, and returned to town next day; Mr. Farmer and the four gentlemen coming home in a barouche; Mackintosh, Grimaldi, and some other professional persons preferring to walk, for the benefit of the exercise.

Upon the way, Grimaldi sounded Mackintosh relative to the professions, connexions, and prospects of his friends; but he evaded making any reply, further than by observing, with an air of great respect, that they were very wealthy people. He dined in Throgmorton Street a few days afterwards, and again tried to penetrate the mystery, as did his wife, who accompanied him. Mr. Mackintosh threw no light upon it, but it was destined to be shortly revealed, as the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER XIII.

1807.

The mystery is cleared up, chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. Alderman Harmer; and the characters of the six Ladies and the six Gentlemen are satisfactorily explained.—The trial of Mackintosh for burglary.—Its result.

About three weeks had elapsed since the last dinner in Throgmorton Street, during the whole of which time nothing had been seen or heard either of the six ladies or the six gentlemen, when, as Grimaldi was sitting reading in his parlour, a strange gentleman was shown into the room. As he was accustomed to be waited upon by many people of whom he knew nothing, he requested the gentleman to take a chair, and after a few common-place remarks upon the weather and the papers, begged to ask his business with him.

"Why, my business with you, Mr. Grimaldi," said the stranger, putting down his hat as if he had come to stop a long time, "is of a very peculiar nature. Perhaps I had better commence by telling you who I am. My name is Harmer."

"Harmer?" said Grimaldi, running over in his mind all the theatrical names he had ever heard.

"Mr. James Harmer, of Hatton Garden. The reason of my waiting upon you is this,—I wish to speak to you upon a very disagreeable affair."

There was a peculiar solemnity in the visitor's manner, although it was very gentlemanly and quiet, which at once threw Grimaldi into a state of great nervous excitement. He entreated him, with a very disturbed countenance, to be kind enough to explain the nature of the communication he had to make, as explicitly as he could.

"To come, then, at once to the point," said Mr. Harmer,—"do you not know a person of the name of Mackintosh?"

"Yes, certainly," replied Grimaldi, his thoughts flying off at a tangent first to Throgmorton Street, and then to the ladies and gentlemen in Charlotte Street;—"oh, yes, I know him."

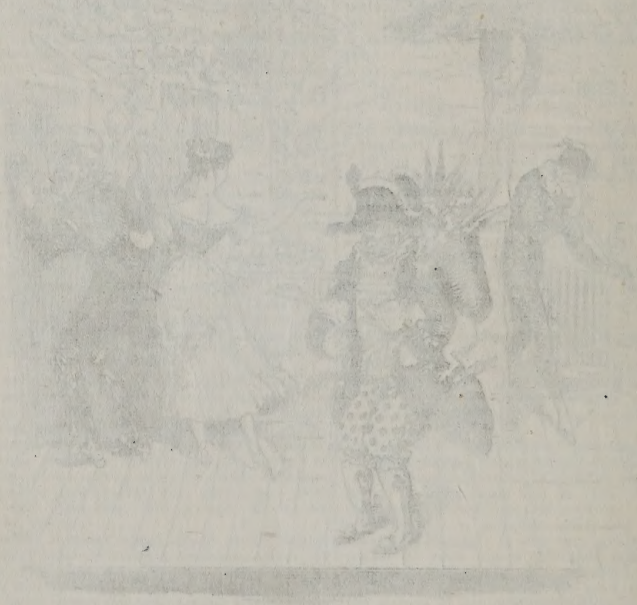
"He is now," said Mr. Harmer, solemnly, "in great danger of losing his life."

Grimaldi at once supposed his visitor was a doctor,—said he was very sorry to hear it, asked how long he had been ill, and begged to know what was the matter with him.

"His bodily health is good enough," replied Mr. Harmer, with a half-smile. "In the course of my professional career, Mr. Grimaldi, I have known many men in imminent danger of losing their lives who have been in most robust health."

Grimaldi bowed his head, and presumed his visitor referred to cases in which the patient had gone off suddenly. Mr. Harmer said that he certainly did, and that he had strong reason to fear that Mr. Mackintosh would go off one morning very suddenly indeed.

LIVE PROPERTIES. (See p. 63.)



"I greatly regret to hear it," said the other. "But pray tell me his condition without reserve: you may safely be communicative to me. What is the nature of the disorder? what is it called?"

"Burglary," answered Mr. Harmer, quaintly.

"Burglary!" exclaimed Grimaldi, trembling from head to foot.

"Nothing less," replied Mr. Harmer. "The state of the case, Mr. Grimaldi, is simply this: Mackintosh is accused of having committed a burglary at Congleton, in Cheshire. I am a solicitor, and am engaged on his behalf; the evidence against him is very strong, and if he be found guilty, which I must say appears to me extremely likely, he will most infallibly be hanged."

This intelligence so amazed Grimaldi, that he fell into a chair as if he had been shot, and it was some little time before he was sufficiently recovered to resume the conversation. The moment he could do so, he hastened to explain that he had never supposed Mackintosh to be other than an honest man, or he would carefully have shunned all acquaintance with him.

"He has been anything but an honest man for a long time past," said Mr Harmer: "still, I may say that he is anxious to reform; and, at all events, I am certain that this particular robbery was not committed by him."

"Good God! and he still likely to be hung for it!"

"Certain," said Mr. Harmer; "unless we can prove an *alibi*. There is only one man who has it in his power to do so; and that man, Mr. Grimaldi, is yourself."

"Then," said Grimaldi, "you may command me."

In a lengthened and, to him, very interesting conversation which ensued, he learned that the robbery had been committed on the 13th of March, on the very night on which he had played for Lund's benefit at Woolwich, and afterwards supped with Mackintosh and his friends. This accidental circumstance was of course of the last importance to Mr. Harmer's client, and that gentleman receiving a promise from Grimaldi that he would make an affidavit of the fact if required, wished him a good morning and left him.

Mackintosh being admitted to bail a few days afterwards, called upon Grimaldi to express his gratitude for the readiness with which he had consented to give his important evidence. The insight into the man's character which Mr. Harmer had given him, rendered him of course desirous to be as little in his company as possible; but as his kind nature would not allow him to wound his feelings more than was absolutely necessary in this interview (quite voluntary on his part), immediately after the exposure, and as he was moreover very desirous to put a few questions to him concerning the twelve ladies and gentlemen, he dissembled his dislike, and placed some refreshment before him, of which he partook. He then said,

"Mr. Mackintosh, I cannot suppose you to be guilty of any act of this kind, for you have so many circumstances in your favour. Putting myself out of the question,—I am merely an actor working for my subsistence,—you can call, to prove your *alibi*, gentlemen of station and undoubted respectability. Mr. Farmer and his friends, for instance, could not fail to have great weight with the Court."

A very perceptible change overspread the countenance of Mr. Mackintosh when he heard these words. He shook his head with great vehemence, and looked strongly disposed to laugh. Grimaldi, who was one of the simplest creatures in all worldly matters that ever breathed, paused for a reply, but finding his acquaintance said nothing, added,

"Besides,—the ladies. Dear me, Mr. Mackintosh, the appearance of those gentlemen's wives would be almost enough to acquit you at once."

"Mr. Grimaldi," said Mackintosh, with a slight tremor in his voice which, despite his serious situation, arose from an incipient tendency to laughter,—"Mr. Grimaldi, none of those women are married."

Grimaldi stared incredulously.

"Not one," said Mackintosh: "they only pass for married people—they are not really so."

"Then, how," said Grimaldi, waxing very angry, "how dared you to invite my wife among them, and induce me to take her there!"

"I'm very sorry, sir," said the man humbly.

"I'll tell you what, sir," interposed the other, "I'll be put off no longer: this is not the time for secrecy and falsehood, nor is it your interest to tell me anything but the truth. Now, I demand to know at once the real characters of these people, and why you shook your head when I mentioned your bringing them forward as witnesses."

"Mr. Grimaldi," replied the man with great apparent humility, "they would not come if they were sent for, and besides, if they did, it would injure, not assist me, for they are all marked men."

"Marked men!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"Too true, sir," said Mackintosh: "desperate characters every one."

"What! Farmer?"

"He was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey, and got a reprieve while standing on the drop beneath the gallows."

"And Williams?"

"Williams is a forger of notes."

"And Jesson?"

"He and Barber are both burglars."

"And the Jewish-looking man,—I forget the rascal's name,—the man who sings Kelly's songs; what is he?"

"Oh, he helps to pass the forged notes, and has been three times in the pillory."

"There is one other man whom I have not named—that fellow Jones; what is he? a murderer?"

"No, sir, only a burglar," answered Mackintosh. "Don't you recollect, Mr. Grimaldi, that he would not join the party to Woolwich?"

"Perfectly well."

"Well, sir, the truth is, he left town for Cheshire the same day the party was proposed, and he is the man who actually committed the deed I am charged with. He did the robbery. I found it out only to-day; but, though I know it, I can't prove it now:—and all those people in Charlotte Street are doing their best to get me found guilty, and save the real man, who is better liked among them than I am."

The enumeration of all these crimes, the reflection of having been intimately associated with such wretches, and the fear of having his innocence confounded with their guilt, quite overwhelmed their unfortunate victim. He was thoroughly stupefied for some minutes, and then, starting up with uncontrollable fury, seized the man by the throat, and demanded how he durst take him among such a horde of villains, under pretence of being his friend. Mackintosh, alarmed at this unexpected ebullition of resentment, fell on his knees before him in the most abject manner, and poured forth many entreaties for mercy, and protestations of regret.

"Answer me one question," said Grimaldi, releasing his hold: "give me a plain and straightforward answer, for it's only by telling me the truth now that you can hope for any leniency at my hands. What was your motive for taking me into the company of these men and women, and why did they want to have me among them?"

"I'll tell you the truth, by God!" replied Mackintosh, "and without the smallest attempt at disguise. They thought you must be very good company, and hearing me say that I knew you, gave me no rest until I consented to take you to the house in Charlotte Street; which I at last agreed to do, stipulating, upon my soul, that no harm should ever be done you, and that their real characters should be carefully concealed. You turned out as they expected; they were very much delighted with your songs and stories, and I was obliged to promise to bring you again. And that's the truth."

Although this explanation relieved him from some very terrible fears relative to the motives of these persons in seeking his companionship, it was a very galling reflection to have been playing the jester to a gang of robbers and vagabonds; and as it presented itself to his mind, it drove him almost mad with rage. Never accustomed to give way to his passions, the fit of fury into which he had worked himself was such, that it was many hours before he recovered from its effects. Mr. Mackintosh, with much wisdom, took himself off the moment his confession was concluded.

About a week after this agreeable visit, Grimaldi was sitting at breakfast one morning, when his servant announced a lady, and in walked—as he sat paralyzed with surprise—no less a person than Mrs. Farmer, who, sitting down with great composure and freedom, said, when the servant had left the room,

"Well, Grim, here's Jack Mackintosh has got himself into a pretty hobble, hasn't he?"

"He has indeed," said Grim, all abroad with amazement, "and I am very sorry for it."

"Lord! you don't mean that!" returned the lady. "I'm sure it's more than I am. Of course it's every-

body's turn one time; and Jack's had a very long string."

It being now thoroughly evident that the party, deeming longer concealment hopeless, wished to treat Grimaldi as one of themselves, and to imply that he had been acquainted with their real characters all along, he resolved to act decidedly; so, the moment the lady had finished speaking, said,

"By some extraordinary mistake and blindness I have been led into the society of yourself and your associates, ma'am. I regret this bitterly for many reasons, but for two especially: first, that I should ever have had acquaintance with such characters; and secondly, that it compels me to act with apparent harshness to a woman. As I have no other course to pursue, however, I beg you will have the goodness to tell the ladies and gentlemen whom I have had the unhappiness to meet in Charlotte Street, that I request them never to show their faces here; and that I wish never to see, and certainly shall never speak to any of them again."

The servant entering the room at this point in reply to the summons he had previously given, he continued,

"As soon as this person has rested herself after her walk, show her to the door; and take care that you never admit her, or any of the people who have been in the habit of coming here with her, into the house again." With these words he quitted the room, as did the "lady" immediately afterwards; and well pleased he was to be rid of her society.

Sadlers Wells opened the season of 1807 with a new piece, called the "Ogre," in which he enacted a character dignified by the name of "Scamperino." This drama was not very successful, lingering only through ten nights; but as he was wanted of course in something else, and had every night to hurry to Covent Garden afterwards, to play the Clown in Mother Goose, which was still running with unabated spirit, he endured very great fatigue for more than three months, during which the two theatres were open together.

In the July of this year, a very extraordinary circumstance occurred at Sadlers Wells, which was the great topic of conversation in the neighbourhood for some time afterwards. It happened thus:—

Captain George Harris of the Royal Navy (who was related to the Mr. Harris of Covent Garden, and with whom Grimaldi was slightly acquainted,) had recently returned to England after a long voyage. The crew being paid off, many of the men followed their commander up to London, and proceeded to enjoy themselves after the usual fashion of sailors. Sadlers Wells was at that time a famous place of resort with the blue-jackets, the gallery being sometimes almost solely occupied by seamen and their female companions. A large body of Captain Harris's men resorted hither one night, and amongst them a man who was deaf and dumb, and had been so for many years. This man was placed by his shipmates in the front row of the gallery. Grimaldi was in great force that night, and, although the audience were in one roar of laughter, nobody appeared to enjoy his fun and humour more than this poor fellow. His companions, good-naturedly, took a good deal of notice of him, and one of them, who talked very well with his fingers, inquired how he liked the entertainments; to which the deaf-and-dumb man replied, through the same medium, and with various gestures of great delight, that he had never seen anything half so comical before.

As the scene progressed, Grimaldi's tricks and jokes became still more irresistible; and at length, after a violent peal of laughter and applause which quite shook the theatre, and in which the dumb man joined most heartily, he suddenly turned to his mate who sat next him, and cried out with much glee, "What a d—d funny fellow!"

"Why, Jack," shouted the other man, starting back with great surprise, "can you speak?"

"Speak!" returned the other; "ay, that I can, and hear too."

Upon this, the whole party of course gave three vehement cheers, and at the conclusion of the piece adjourned in a great procession to the "Sir Hugh Myddelton," hard by, with the recovered man elevated on the shoulders of half a dozen friends in the centre. A crowd of people quickly assembled round the door, and great excitement and curiosity were occasioned as the intelligence ran from mouth to mouth, that a deaf-and-dumb man had come to speak and hear, all owing to the cleverness of Joey Grimaldi.

The landlady of the tavern, thinking Grimaldi would like to see his patient, told the man, that if he would call next morning, he should see the actor who had made him laugh so much. Grimaldi being apprised of the circumstance, repaired to the house at the appointed time, and saw him, accompanied by several of his companions, all of whom still continued to manifest the liveliest interest in the sudden change that had happened to their friend, and kept on cheering and drinking and treating everybody in the house in proof of their gratification. The man, who appeared an intelligent, well-behaved fellow, said that in the earlier part of his life he could both speak and hear very well, and that he had attributed his deprivation of the two senses to the intense heat of the sun in the quarter of the world to which he had been, and from which he had very recently returned. He added, that on the previous evening he had for a long time felt a powerful anxiety to express his delight at what was passing on the stage, and that after some feat of Grimaldi's, which struck him as being particularly amusing, he had made a strong effort to deliver his thoughts, in which, to his own great astonishment no less than that of his comrades, he succeeded. Mr. Charles Dibdin, who was present, put several questions to the man, and from his answers it appeared to every one present that he was speaking the truth. Indeed, his story was in some measure confirmed by Captain Harris himself; for one evening about six months afterwards, as Grimaldi was narrating the circumstance in the green-room at Covent Garden, that gentleman, who chanced to be present, immediately remarked that he had no reason from the man's behaviour while with him to suppose him an impostor, and that he had seen him on that day in the full possession of all his senses.

In the month of August following this circumstance, Grimaldi received a subpœna to attend the trial of Mackintosh at Stafford. He immediately gave notice to the manager of Sadlers Wells that he was compelled to absent himself for a few days, and Bradbury of the Circus was engaged to supply his place. Mr. Harmer and himself went down together; and on the day following their arrival, a true bill having been found against Mackintosh by the grand jury, the trial came on.

Grimaldi forgets the name of the prosecutor's counsel, and regrets the circumstance very much, observing, that the lengthened notice which he bestowed upon him ought to have impressed his name on his memory. If this notice were flattering on account of its length, it certainly was not so in any other respect, inasmuch as the gentleman in question, in the exercise of that license which many practitioners unaccustomed to briefs assume, was pleased to designate the principal witness for the prosecution,—to wit, Mr. Joseph Grimaldi,—as a common player, a mountebank stroller, a man reared in and ever accustomed to vice in its most repulsive and degrading forms, a man who was necessarily a systematic liar, and, in fine, a man upon whose word or oath no thinking person could place any reliance.

During this exordium, and pending the logical deductions of the ingenious gentleman, whose name is unhappily lost to his country, the prisoner eyed his witness with intense anxiety, fearing, no doubt, that in his examination, either by angry words, or by attempting to retort on the counsel, or by volunteering jokes, or by seeking revenge upon himself, against whom he had such just ground of complaint, he might pass the rope round his neck instead of serving his cause. But his fears were needless. His witness had gone there to discharge what he considered a solemn duty, and, apart from all personal considerations, to give his honest testimony in a case involving a man's life and death. He went there of course prepared to give his evidence in the manner best befitting himself and the occasion; and if he wanted any additional incentive to caution and coolness, he would have found it in the taunts of the opposing counsel, which naturally made him desirous to show by his behaviour, that the same man who could play the Clown upon a public stage, could conduct himself with perfect propriety as a private individual; in the same way as many young gentlemen who are offensive in wigs, become harmless and obscure in social life.

No fewer than nine witnesses were examined for the prosecution, all of whom, to Grimaldi's astonishment and horror, swore positively to the identity of the prisoner. The case for the prosecution being closed, he was immediately put into the box, for the defence; when, after stating that the prisoner was in his company at Woolwich at the time of the commission of the burglary, he proceeded to detail as briefly as he could all that had

happened on the day and night in question. He carefully suppressed any extraneous matter that related to himself or his own feelings which might have been injurious to the prisoner, and produced the play-bill of the night, to prove that there could be no mistake respecting the date. He was then submitted to a very long and vexatious cross-examination, but he never lost his temper for an instant, or faltered in his testimony in any way; and at its conclusion he was well rewarded for his good feeling and impartiality, by the highly flattering terms in which the presiding judge was pleased to express his opinion of the manner in which he had conducted himself.*

His wife was the next witness called, and she fully corroborated his evidence. Two more witnesses were examined on the same side, when the judge interposed, putting it to the jury whether they really deemed it necessary to hear any further evidence, and not hesitating to say that the full conviction on his own mind was, that the witnesses for the prosecution were mistaken, and that the prisoner at the bar was innocent of the offence laid to his charge. The jury fully coincided in the learned judge's opinion, and immediately returned a verdict of "Not guilty," after a trial which had already lasted for upwards of nine hours.

Previous to his return to town, on the following morning, Grimaldi sought and obtained a few minutes' private conversation with Mackintosh. In this interview he used his utmost endeavours to awaken his mind to a sense of his situation, to induce him to reflect on the crimes he had committed, and to place before him the inevitable consequences of his career if he held the same course; by all of which remonstrances the man appeared much affected, and for which he expressed himself very grateful. It was scarcely necessary for Grimaldi to add, that any communication between them must be discontinued for the future; but, lest his true repentance might be endangered by the loss of the only friend he seemed to have, he gave him permission to write to him if he ever needed his assistance, and assured him that if it were in his power to relieve him, the appeal should never be made in vain. It says something for the honour of human nature and the sincerity of the man's repentance, that he never took undue advantage of this permission, and, indeed, was never heard of by Grimaldi again.

The witness returned to town, as he had every reason to do, with a light heart; and as he never heard any further intelligence either of the half-dozen gentlemen or the six Lucretias to whom he had so unwittingly introduced his wife, he experienced no further trouble or disquiet on this score.

CHAPTER XIV.

1807 to 1808.

Bradbury, the Clown.—His voluntary confinement in a Madhouse, to screen an "Honourable" Thief.—His release, strange conduct, subsequent career, and death. —Dreadful Accident at Sadlers Wells.—The Nightdrives to Finchley.—Trip to Birmingham.—Mr. Macready, the Manager, and his curious Stage-properties.—Sudden recall to Town.

On his return to town, of course, he went immediately to Sadlers Wells; where, however, to his great surprise, he was informed by Mr. Dibdin that he was not wanted just yet, inasmuch as Bradbury had been engaged for a fortnight, and had not been there above half the time. He added, too, that Bradbury had made a great hit, and become very popular.

This intelligence vexed Grimaldi not a little, as he naturally feared that the sudden popularity of the new favourite might affect that of the old one; but his annoyance was much increased when he was informed that the proprietors were anxious that on the night of Bradbury's benefit they should both play in the same pantomime. He yielded his consent with a very ill grace, and with the conviction that it would end in his entire loss of favour with the audience. When the proposition was made to Bradbury in his presence, it was easy to see that he liked it as little as himself, which was natural enough. It was not for him, however, to oppose the suggestion, as the combination of strength would very likely draw a great house, and he had only taken half of it with the proprietors for that night.

It was accordingly arranged that they should appear together on the following Saturday; Bradbury sustaining the part of the Clown for the first three scenes in the pantomime, then Grimaldi taking it for the next three scenes, and Bradbury coming in again to close the piece. Grimaldi was so much dissatisfied with these arrangements, that, on the morning of the day fixed, he told his friend Richard Lawrence (now or lately the Surrey treasurer) that he was certain it was "all up with him," and that Bradbury had thrown him completely out of favour with the public.

The result, however, was not what he anticipated. The moment he appeared, he was received with the most tremendous applause. Animated by this encouraging reception, he redoubled his exertions, and went through his three scenes amidst the loudest and most enthusiastic plaudits. This reception rather vexed and confused the other who had to follow, and who, striving to outdo his predecessor, made such a complete failure, that, although it was his own benefit, and he might reasonably be supposed to have a good many friends in the house, he was actually hissed, and ran off the stage in great disorder. Grimaldi finished the pantomime for him, and the brilliant manner in which it went off sufficiently testified to him that all the fears and doubts to which he had previously given way were utterly groundless. Indeed, when the performances were over, Bradbury frankly admitted that he was the best Clown he had ever seen, and that if he had been aware of his abilities, he would not have suffered himself to be put in competition with him on any account whatever.

This Bradbury was a clever actor in his way, and a very good Clown, but of so different a character from Grimaldi, that it was hardly fair to either, to attempt instituting a comparison between them. He was a tumbling Clown rather than a humorous one, and would perform many wonderful and dangerous feats. He would jump from the flies—tha is, from the curtains above the stage—down on to the stage itself, and do many other things equally surprising. To enable himself to go through these performances without danger, he always occupied a very long time in dressing for the part, and adjusting no fewer than nine strong pads about his person in such a manner as to protect those parts of his frame which were the most liable to injury,—wearing one on the head, one round the shoulders, one round the hips, two on the elbows, two on the knees, and two on the heels of his shoes. Thus armed, he would proceed to throw and knock himself about in a manner which, to those unacquainted with his precautions, appeared to indicate an intense anxiety to meet with some severe, if not fatal accident. Grimaldi, on the contrary, never wore any padding in his life; nor did he attempt any of the great exploits which distinguished Bradbury. His Clown was of a much more composed and subdued temperament, although much more comical and amusing, as is sufficiently shown by the result of the comparison between the two which has just been described. Bradbury was very original withal, and copied no one; for he had struck out a peculiar line for himself, and never departed from it.

After the night at Sadlers Wells, Grimaldi heard nothing more of Bradbury for some time; but at length received a note from him, dated, to his excessive surprise, from a private madhouse at Hoxton, requesting him to visit him there without delay, as he was exceedingly anxious to see him. He was much astonished at this request, as little or no intimacy had previously existed between them, and the place where the letter was dated was so very unexpected and startling. Not knowing what to do, he showed the letter to his friend Lawrence, who recommended him by all means to go, and volunteered to accompany him.

As he gladly availed himself of this offer, they went

* The gentleman who first revised Grimaldi's reminiscences adds the following note in this stage of the Memoirs: "That Mr. Grimaldi has not unworthily commended his own conduct in this instance, no one who has heard him speak in public will be disposed to believe. His manner was always that of a man who, while he entertained a just respect for himself, properly respected the parties to whom he addressed himself. This was strikingly exemplified whenever, in consequence of the sudden illness of a performer, or some other stage-mishap, an apology became necessary; on which occasions he would step forward, and, announcing the calamity, claim the kindness of the audience, with so much gentlemanly ease, and such an entire absence of all buffoonery or grimace, that, in spite of his grotesque dress and appearance, and the associations which they necessarily awakened, the audience forgot the Clown, and only remembered the gentleman."

together to Hoxton, and inquiring at the appointed place, were introduced to Bradbury, who was a patient in the asylum, and had submitted to the customary regulations, all his hair being shaved off, and his person being kept under strict restraint. Concluding that he had a maniac to deal with, Grimaldi spoke in a very gentle, quiet manner, which the patient observing, burst into a roar of laughter.

"My dear fellow," said Bradbury, "don't look and speak to me in that way!—for though you find me here, treated as a patient, and with my head shaved, I am no more mad than you are."

Grimaldi rather doubted this assurance, knowing it to be a common one with insane people, and therefore kept at a respectful distance. He was not long in discovering, however, that what Bradbury said was perfectly true. The circumstances which had led to his confinement in the lunatic asylum were briefly these.

Bradbury was a very dashing person, keeping a tandem, and associating with many gentlemen and men of title. Upon one occasion when he had been playing at Plymouth, a man-of-war was coming round from that town to Portsmouth, on board of which he had several friends among the officers, who took him on board with them. It was agreed that they should sup together at Portsmouth. A splendid meal having been prepared, they spent the night, or at least the larger portion of it, in great hilarity. As morning approached, Bradbury rose to retire, and then, with considerable surprise, discovered that a magnificent gold snuff-box, with a gold chain attached, which he was accustomed to wear in his fob, and which he had placed on the table for the use of his friends, had disappeared. He mentioned the circumstance, and a strict search was immediately instituted, but with no other effect than that of proving that the valuable box was gone. When every possible conjecture had been hazarded, and inquiry made without success, it was recollected that one of their companions, a young gentleman already writing "Honourable" before his name, and having a coronet in no very remote perspective, had retired from the table almost immediately after supper:—it was suggested that he might have taken it in jest, for the purpose of alarming its owner.

Bradbury and several others went to this gentleman's room, and communicated to him the loss, and their doubts respecting him. The young gentleman positively denied any knowledge of the box, and, after bitterly reproaching them for their suspicions, abruptly closed the door in their faces, leaving Bradbury in a state of violent mortification at his loss.

On the following morning, nothing more having been heard of the missing property, the gentleman, against whom Bradbury now nourished many serious misgivings, sent down word to his friends, that he was so much vexed with them for their conduct of the night before, in supposing it possible he could have taken anything away even in jest, that he should not join them at breakfast, but, on the contrary, should immediately return to town. This message, instead of allaying, as it was doubtless intended to do, Bradbury's suspicions, caused him to think still worse of the matter; and upon ascertaining that the young man had actually taken a place in the next coach which started for London, he lost no time in obtaining a warrant, by virtue of which he took him prisoner just as he was stepping into the coach. Upon searching his portmanteau, the box was found, together with several articles belonging to his other companions. Bradbury was determined to prosecute, not considering the young gentleman's nobility any palliation of the theft: he was instantly taken before a magistrate, and fully committed for trial.

No sooner did this affair become known to the relatives and connexions of the offender, than, naturally anxious to preserve the good name of the family, they proceeded to offer large sums to Bradbury if he would relinquish the prosecution,—all of which proposals he, for some time, steadily refused. At length they offered him a handsome annuity firmly secured for the whole of his life: he was not proof against this temptation, and at length signified his readiness to accept the bribe.

The next point to be considered was, how Bradbury could accept the money without compounding a felony, and increasing the obloquy already cast upon the thief. He hit upon and carried into execution a most singular plan:—he caused the report to be circulated that he had suddenly become insane—committed many extravagant acts—and in a short time was, apparently against his own will, but in reality by his own contrivance, deprived of his liberty, and conveyed to the asylum where Grimaldi visited him. The consequence of this step was, that when the stealer of the snuff-box was placed upon his trial, no prosecutor appearing, he was adjudged not guilty, and liberated accordingly. Intelligence of this was directly sent to Bradbury, who proceeded to make arrangements for his own release: this was soon effected, and it was on the eve of the day of his departure that Grimaldi saw him in the madhouse. His only object in writing, or rather, in causing the letter to be written, for he could not write a line himself, nor read either, was, to ask him to play for his ensuing benefit at the Surrey Theatre, which he readily consented to do; then wishing him a speedy deliverance from his disagreeable abode, he took his departure.

The next day Bradbury came out of the asylum, telling everybody that he was perfectly recovered, having got well in as sudden a manner as he fell ill, and in the following week his benefit took place. Grimaldi played and sang for him, and took money at the gallery-door, to boot. The house was quite full, and everything went on well until Bradbury made his appearance, when, impelled by some strange and sudden whim, he was guilty of a disgusting piece of irreverence and impertinence. The consequence of this was, that the audience very naturally and properly took great offence, and upon a repetition of the conduct, literally hooted him from the stage.

This was the ruin of Bradbury as a pantomimist. He did not appear again in London for many years, and although he played occasionally in the country theatres, never afterwards regained his former rank and celebrity in the profession. As far as pecuniary matters were concerned, it did not matter much to him, the annuity affording him a handsome independence; but whether he afterwards sold it and dissipated the money, or whether the annuity itself was discontinued in the course of years, this at least is certain, that when he died, which he did in London in 1828, he was in very indifferent circumstances, if not in actual want.

In October, Covent Garden commenced the new campaign, and brought forward Mother Goose, which ran with the same degree of success as before until nearly Christmas, and was played altogether twenty-nine times.

On the 15th of this month, a most frightful accident occurred at Sadlers Wells. The pantomime was played first that night, which, joined to his having nothing to do at Covent Garden, enabled Grimaldi to go home early to bed. At midnight he was awakened by a great noise in the street, and loud and repeated knocks at the door of his house. At first he concluded it might be some idle party amusing themselves by knocking and running away,—an intellectual amusement not at that time exclusively confined to a few gentlemen of high degree; but finding that it was repeated, and that the noise without increased, he hastily slipped on a morning-gown and trousers, and hurried to the street-door.

The people who were clamouring outside were for the most part friends, who exclaimed, when he appeared, that they had merely come to assure themselves of his personal safety, and were rejoiced to find that he had escaped. He now learned, for the first time, that some vagabonds in the pit of the theatre had raised a cry of "Fire!" during the performance of the last piece, "The Ocean Fiend," and that the audience had risen simultaneously to make their escape; that a violent rush towards the doors had ensued, and that in the confusion and fright, a most fearful loss of life had taken place. He waited to hear no more, but instantly ran off to the theatre.

On arriving there, he found the crowd of people collected around it so dense as to render approach by the usual path impossible. Filled with anxiety, and determined to ascertain the real state of the case, he ran round to the opposite bank of the New River, plunged in, swam across, and finding the parlour window open and a light at the other end of the room, threw up the sash and jumped in *à la Harlequin*. What was his horror, on looking round, to discover that there lay stretched in the apartment no fewer than nine dead bodies! Yes! there lay the remains of nine human beings, lifeless, and scarcely yet cold, whom a few hours back he had been himself exciting to shouts of laughter. Paralysed by the sad sight, he stood awhile without the power of motion; then, hurrying to the door, hastily sought to rid himself of the dreadful scene. It was locked without, and he vainly strove to open it, so knocked violently for assistance. At first the family of

Mr. Hughes were greatly terrified at hearing these sounds issuing from a room tenanted, as they imagined, only by the dead; but at length recognising the voice, they unlocked the door, and he gladly emerged from the apartment.

It was not known until next day how many lives were lost; but when the actual loss of life could be ascertained, it appeared that twenty-three people, male and female, were killed, not to mention many dangerous and severe accidents. This melancholy catastrophe was mainly attributable to the imprudence of those persons who reached the theatre-doors first, and who, upon finding that nothing really was the matter, sought to return to their places. The meeting of the two crowds in the passages caused a complete stoppage; and this leading the people inside to believe that all egress was blocked up, impelled them to make violent efforts to escape, for the most part fatal to the unfortunate persons who tried them. Several people flung themselves from the gallery into the pit, others rushed hopelessly into the densest part of the crowd and were suffocated, others were trodden under foot, and hence the melancholy result.

This accident happening on the last night but four of the season, it was deemed prudent not to reopen the house that year. Such performers as were entitled to benefits and had not yet taken them, took them at the Circus; and thus terminated the season of 1807,—the most melancholy termination of a season which Sadlers Wells Theatre had ever known.

On the 26th of December was produced "Harlequin in his Element, or Fire, Water, Earth, and Air," in which Bologna and Grimaldi were the Harlequin and Clown. It was highly successful, and in Grimaldi's opinion deservedly so, for he always considered it one of the best pantomimes in which he ever played. During this season he also performed in an unsuccessful melodrama entitled "Bonifacio and Bridgetino," and also Baptiste in "Raymond and Agnes," which latter piece went off very well and was repeated several times.

At this time he had a cottage at Finchley, to which place he used to drive down in his gig after the performances. If there were no rehearsal, he remained there until the following afternoon; if there were, he returned to town immediately after breakfast. His principal reason for taking the house originally, was, that his young son, of whom he was extremely fond, might have the benefit of country air; but both he and his wife became so much attached to it, that when his original term expired, he renewed the lease, and retained it altogether for several years.

He met with numerous little adventures during these night-drives after the theatre: sometimes he fell asleep as soon as he had turned out of town, and only awoke when he arrived at his own gate. One night he was so fatigued with his performance, that he still continued to sleep when the horse (a very steady one, who would always find his way home without assistance) had stopped at the gate. The best of it was, that upon this particular night, the man-servant, who always sat up for him, had fallen asleep too; so there sat he slumbering on one side of the fence, while on the other side, not six feet off, sat his master in the gig, fast asleep too. And so they both remained until the violent snorting of the horse, which probably thought it high time to turn in for the night, awoke the man, who roused the master and speedily set all to rights. But as one circumstance which occurred to him during these night journeys will be found narrated at greater length in another part of this volume, we will leave the subject for the present.

He very grievously offended Mr. Fawcett, in March, 1808, from a very slight cause, and without the remotest intention of doing so. Fawcett called at his cottage at Finchley one afternoon, on his road to town from his own house at Totteridge, which was only two miles distant from Grimaldi's, and asked Grimaldi to play for his benefit, then close at hand: this he most willingly promised to do.

"Ah," said Fawcett, "but, understand I don't want you to play Clown or anything of that sort: I want you to do Brocket, in the Son-in-Law."

Grimaldi demurred a little to this proposition, considering that as he had made a great hit in one branch of his profession, he could not do better than retain his standing in it, without attempting some new line in which, by failure, he might injure his reputation. Not wishing to disoblige Mr. Fawcett if he could possibly help it, he replied that he must decline giving an answer at that moment, but that in the course of a day or two he would write. Having consulted his friends in the mean time, and being strongly advised by them not to appear in the character Mr. Fawcett had mentioned, he wrote, declining in respectful terms to do so, and stating the grounds of his objection. Odd as it may appear, the little circumstance angered him much: he never afterwards behaved towards him with any cordiality, and for the three years immediately following, never so much as spoke to or noticed him whenever they chanced to meet.

On the 14th, he received permission from Mr. Kemble to play for his sister-in-law's benefit at the Birmingham theatre, which was then under the management of Mr. Macready, the father of the great tragedian. Immediately upon his arrival, Grimaldi repaired to his hotel, and was welcomed by Mr. Macready with much cordiality and politeness, proposing that he should remain in Birmingham two or, if possible, three nights after the benefit at which he was announced to perform, and offering terms of the most liberal description. Anticipating a proposal of this nature, Grimaldi had, before he left town, inquired what the performances were likely to be at Covent Garden for some days to come. Finding that if the existing arrangements were adhered to, he could not be wanted for at least a week, he had resolved to accept any good offer that might be made to him at Birmingham, and therefore closed with Mr. Macready without hesitation. After breakfast they walked together to the theatre to rehearse; and here Grimaldi discovered a great lack of those adjuncts of stage effect technically known as "properties;" there were no tricks, nor indeed was there anything requisite for pantomimic business. After vainly endeavouring to devise some means by which the requisite articles could be dispensed with, he mentioned his embarrassment to the manager.

"What! properties?" exclaimed that gentleman; "wonderful! you London stars require a hundred things, where we country people are content with one: however, whatever you want you shall have.—Here, Will, go down to the market and buy a small pig, a goose, and two ducks. Mr. Grimaldi wants some properties, and must have them." The man grinned, took the money, and went away. After some reflection, Grimaldi decided in his own mind that the manager's directions had been couched in some peculiar phrases common to the theatre, and at once went about arranging six pantomime scenes, with which the evening's entertainments were to conclude. While he was thus engaged, a violent uproar and loud shouts of laughter hailed the return of the messenger, who, having fulfilled his commission to the very letter, presented him with a small pig, a goose, and two ducks, all alive, and furthermore with Mr. Macready's compliments, and he deeply regretted to say that those were all the properties in the house.

He accepted them with many thanks, and arranged a little business accordingly. He caused the old man in the pantomime and his daughter to enter, immediately after the rising of the curtain, as though they had just come back from market, while he himself, as Clown and their servant, followed, carrying their purchases. He dressed himself in an old livery coat with immense pockets, and a huge cocked hat: both were, of course, over his Clown's costume. At his back he carried a basket laden with carrots and turnips; stuffed a duck into each pocket, leaving their heads hanging out; carried the pig under one arm, and the goose under the other. Thus fitted and attired, he presented himself to the audience, and was received with roars of laughter. His songs were all encored—Tippitywitchit three times, and the hit was most decided. The house was full to the ceiling, and it was equally full on the following night, when he played Scaramouch; the third night was as good as any of the preceding, and the fourth, which terminated his engagement, was as successful as the rest. Just as he was going on the stage on this last evening, and had even taken up his "properties" for that purpose, a note was put into his hands, which was dated that morning, and had just arrived from London, whence it had been despatched with all possible speed. He opened it hastily, and read, in the hand of an intimate friend,

"DEAR JOE,—

"They have announced you to play to-morrow night at Covent Garden; and as they know you have not returned from Birmingham, I fear it is done to injure you,

Lose not a moment, but start immediately on the receipt of this."

He instantly ran to Mr. Macready, and showing him the letter, told him, that although he was very sorry to disappoint his Birmingham friends, he could not stop to play.

"Not stop to play!" echoed the manager; "why, my good fellow, they will pull the house down. You must stop to play, and post up to London afterwards. I'll take care that a chaise and four are waiting for you at the stage-door, and that everything shall be ready for you to start, the moment you have finished your business."

He played with the same success to a brilliant house, received 294*l.* from the manager as his remuneration for three nights, threw himself into the chaise, and at twelve o'clock, within a few minutes after he had quitted the stage, was on his road to London.

The weather was tempestuous, the roads in a most desperate condition, and, to make matters worse, he treated the postboys so liberally, in the hope of accelerating their speed, that they became so drunk as to be scarcely able to sit their horses. After various escapes and perils, they discovered, at the end of an unusually long stage, that they had come fourteen miles out of the road, "all in consequence," as one of the boys said, with many hiccups and much drunken gravity,—"all in consequence of only taking one wrong turn."

The result of this combination of mischances was, that he did not reach Salt Hill until seven o'clock on the following evening, having been nineteen hours on the road. Here he jumped into another chaise which fortunately stood ready at the door, and hurried up to London without venturing to stay for any refreshment whatever. He drove straight to the theatre, where he found his friend awaiting his arrival with great trepidation. Hearing that the overture to the piece in which he was to perform was then playing, he gave his friend the 294*l.* to take care of, ran to his dressing-room, dressed for his part which Farley had already made preparations for performing himself, and went on the stage the moment he got his cue, much to the astonishment of his friends, and greatly to the surprise of some individuals connected with the management of the theatre, who had anticipated a very different result from his visit to Birmingham.

CHAPTER XV.

1808 to 1809.

Covent Garden Theatre destroyed by fire.—Grimaldi makes a trip to Manchester: he meets with an accident there, and another at Liverpool.—The Sir Hugh Myddelton Tavern at Sadlers Wells, and a description of some of its frequenters, necessary to a full understanding of the succeeding chapter.

Of course some unforeseen circumstance was to happen, and some unexpected demand to be made on the money so easily earned. A short time before he went to Birmingham, being short of cash, he had commissioned a friend on whom he placed great reliance to get his bill at one month for 150*l.* discounted. The friend put the bill into his pocket-book, and promised to bring the money at night. Night came, but the money did not; it had not arrived when he returned from Birmingham; the friend was nowhere to be found, and he had soon afterwards the satisfaction of paying the whole sum, without having received a sixpence of the money.

During the season of 1808 at Sadlers Wells, the principal and most successful part he had was in a burletta called "Oddfish, or Mrs. Scaite in the Seraglio." His two benefits were bumpers, and the theatre closed on the 26th of September, after another most profitable campaign.

The Covent Garden season, which had terminated on the 13th of July, recommenced on the 12th of September. Seven days afterwards the theatre was burned to the ground, after the performance of Pizarro, and the portrait of Cervantes. The company removed to the Italian Opera-house, and subsequently to the Haymarket; but as Grimaldi was not wanted, he availed himself of an offer to visit the Manchester theatre, then managed by Messrs. Ward, Lewis, and Knight, and left town for that purpose. There was a strong rivalry between the coach proprietors on the road at that time, but, for the safety of the passengers, it was expressly understood between them that the coaches should never be allowed to pass each other, but that the coach which took the lead at starting should retain it all the way through, unless any temporary stoppage of the first vehicle enabled the second to assume the post of honour. Grimaldi's coach was the last, and just as they were going into Macclesfield, the Defiance (which was the name of the other coach), stopping to change horses and to allow the passengers to take tea, became entangled with the wheels of the second vehicle in the darkness of the evening; and when the second coach overset, which it did immediately, the empty Defiance fell upon the top of it so neatly and dexterously, that the passengers were obliged to be dragged through the two coaches before they could be extricated. Fortunately nobody was much hurt; although Grimaldi was the worst off, for he was the undermost, and five stout men (they carried six insides at that time) fell on the top of him. The only disagreeable part of the matter was, that they were delayed upwards of four hours, and that the unfortunate Defiance was left both literally and figuratively *on* the road, for a much longer time.

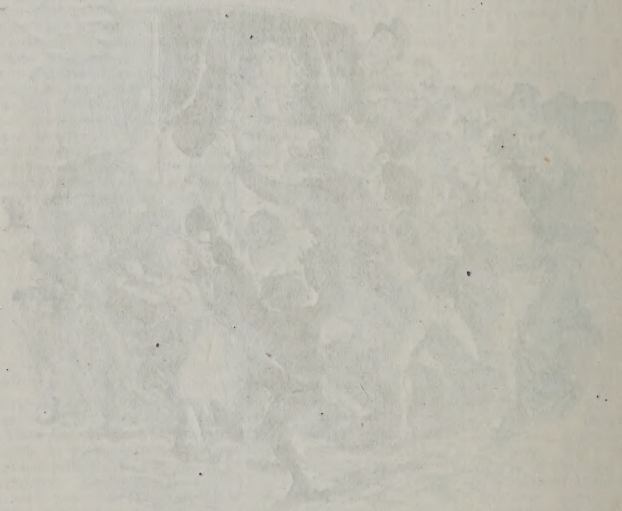
During this provincial trip he played six nights at Manchester and one at Liverpool, for which he received in all 25*l.* The only drawback upon the expedition was that he sustained two accidents, the effects of which were quite bad enough, but might have been much more serious. He arranged and got up a very pretty little pantomime called "Castles in the Air," in which he of course played Clown. His first appearance was to be from a large bowl, placed in the centre of the stage, and labelled "Gooseberry fool;" to pass through which it was necessary for him to ascend from beneath the stage through a trap-door which the bowl concealed. On the first night of the piece, he ascended from below at the proper time; but when he gained the level of the stage, the ropes which were attached to the trap broke, and he fell back into the cellar from which he had just risen. He was terribly shaken and stunned by the fall, but quickly recovering himself, ascended the stairs, went on the stage, and played as though nothing had happened to discompose him. In spite of his assumed calmness, however, he was in agony during the whole of the first scene; but the pain wholly left him as he went on, in the excitement of the part, and by the time he had finished the pantomime, he was as well as he had been before its commencement.

This was at Manchester. The Liverpool Theatre belonging to the same managers, and being resorted to by the same company, they all travelled thither for one night for the purpose of playing "Castles in the Air" as the afterpiece, having the same master-carpenter with them as they had had at Manchester. Grimaldi sought the man out, and explaining to him the nature of the accident which had happened through his negligence on the previous night, entreated him to render all secure for that evening, and to prevent a repetition of the occurrence. This he promised, but failed to do notwithstanding, for a precisely similar accident took place here. Grimaldi had ascended to the stage, and got his head through the bowl, when, as a shout of laughter and welcome broke from the audience, the ropes gave way and he was left struggling in the trap. For a second or two he did not fall; for, having passed through the trap nearly to his waist, he strove to support himself by his arms. All his endeavours, however, were vain; the weight of his body pulled him downwards, and the trap being small, his elbows were caught by the edges and forced together above his head, thereby straining his shoulders to such an extent that he thought his arms were wrested from their sockets. He fell a considerable distance, and when he rose from the ground was in excessive pain. He managed with great difficulty to crawl through the first scene, and then warming with his exertions and kindling with the great applause he received, rallied successfully and got through the part with flying colours.

When he reached his inn, which, now that the excitement of acting was over, was a task of considerable difficulty, he was well rubbed with the infallible embrocation and put to bed in a very helpless state. On the following morning, scarcely able to crawl, he was assisted into the coach and returned home.

Grimaldi acted very little at the Haymarket with the Covent Garden company till after Christmas, when "Mother Goose" was revived, with a new last scene, representing the ruins of Covent Garden Theatre transformed by a touch of Harlequin's wand into a new and splendid building. In March he sustained for the first time the character of Kanko in "La Perouse." He took

APPEARING IN PUBLIC. (See p. 71.)



his benefit on the 23rd of May. The season terminated a few nights afterwards; and with it, it may be incidentally observed, terminated the theatrical career of the celebrated Lewis, who retired from the stage at this period.

Sadlers Wells presented no particular novelty in 1809. Its chief production was a piece called "Johnnie Armstrong," in which Grimaldi played Kirstie, a kind of "Touchstone:" it was very successful, and the season closed, as all the Sadlers Wells seasons did at that time, with great profits.

Before adverting to the little adventure arising out of one of the nocturnal rides to which reference has been already made, it will be necessary to mention a few circumstances upon which such interest as it possesses mainly depends.

The pantomime was usually played first at Sadlers Wells. When this was the case, Grimaldi was at liberty by about half-past eight; he would sometimes call at the Sir Hugh Myddelton and take a glass of wine and water with some friends who frequented the house, and then start off in his gig to Finchley.

He had several times met at this tavern a young man of the name of George Hamilton, a working jeweller residing somewhere about Clerkenwell, a sociable good-tempered merry fellow enough, but rather too much addicted to drinking and squandering his money. This man was very sensitive upon the subject of trade, being, as the phrase goes, above his business, having an ambition to be a gentleman, and resenting any allusion to his occupation as a personal affront. He was a very ingenious and skilful man at his business, and could earn a great deal of money; but his companions suspected that these absurdities led him into spending more than he could well afford. Grimaldi was so strongly impressed with this opinion, that, with a good-hearted impulse, he frequently felt tempted to remonstrate with him upon his folly. Their slight intimacy, however, restrained him, and the man continued to take his own course.

These were his mental peculiarities: he had a remarkable physical peculiarity besides, wanting, either from an accident or a natural defect, the third finger of his left hand. Whether he wished to conceal this imperfection, or had some other defect in the same hand, is uncertain, but he invaribly kept his little finger in a bent position beneath the palm of it; so that when he sat or walked, as he usually did with his left hand half hidden in his pocket, the defect was not observable; but when he suddenly changed his position or drew forth his hand in discourse, it had always the appearance of having only two fingers upon it.

Grimaldi's first acquaintance with this person was in 1808, when he was very frequently at Sadlers Wells and the Sir Hugh Myddelton. At the termination of the summer season he lost sight of him, in consequence of his engagements taking him elsewhere; but in Easter 1809, when Sadlers Wells re-opened, and Grimaldi resumed his habit of calling at the tavern for half an hour or so before driving out to Finchley, he again encountered him. He had been married in the interval, and frequently took his wife, a pretty young creature, to the tavern with him, as at that time many tradesmen in the neighbourhood were accustomed to do.

Grimaldi paid little attention to these circumstances at first; but a change had come over the man which irresistibly attracted his attention. He had become very violent and irritable,—had acquired a nervous restlessness of manner, an occasional incoherence of speech, a wildness of look, and betrayed many other indications of a mind somewhat disordered. He dressed differently too: formerly he had been neatly attired, and looked like a respectable, well-doing man; but now he was showy and gaudy, wore a number of large rings and other articles of cheap jewellery, and his desire to be thought a great man had increased greatly,—so much so, indeed, that his declamations against trade and all concerned in it, deeply affronted the worthies who were wont to assemble at the Sir Hugh, and occasioned many disputes and altercations.

All these things evidently made the wife very unhappy. Although he usually abstained from drinking to his customary excess in her presence, he said and did enough to make her wretched, and frequently, when she thought she was unobserved, she would sit in a remote corner and weep bitterly.

One night Hamilton, for such was his name, brought with him a new friend, a man of very sinister appearance and marvellously ill-favoured countenance. They were, or affected to be, both greatly intoxicated. The strange man was introduced by his friend to Grimaldi, and began entering into conversation with him; but as there was something remarkably repulsive in his appearance, he rose and left the room.

The two men came together very often. Nobody knew who or what the stranger was, nobody liked or even spoke to him; and it was constantly observed that whenever Hamilton was in a state of gross intoxication, he was in this person's company. The old visitors of the Sir Hugh shook their heads mysteriously, and hoped he had not fallen into bad company; although, truth to tell, they could not help thinking that appearances were greatly against him.

One night Grimaldi was sitting alone in the room, reading the newspaper, when Hamilton, the stranger, and the poor wife came in together. The former was in a state of intoxication, so much so that he could scarcely stand. The wife had evidently been crying, and seemed truly wretched; but the strange man wore an air of dogged triumph which made him look perfectly hideous.

Curious to see what passed, Grimaldi held the paper before his face and watched them closely. They did not recognise him, but walked to the other end of the room. Hamilton hiccoughed forth an order for something to drink, stammering in reply to the earnest entreaties of his wife, that he would go home directly he had taken "this one glass more." It was brought but not tasted, for his head had fallen upon the table and he was fast asleep before the liquor came.

The man whom he had a minute before named for the first time—Archer he called him—regarded his sleeping companion in silence for some minutes, and then leaning behind him to reach the wife, who was on the other side, touched her lightly on the shoulder. She looked up, and he, pointing with a contemptuous air to the sleeping drunkard, took her hand and pressed it in a manner which it was impossible to misunderstand. She started indignantly from her seat, and darted at the man a look which completely quelled him. He sat with his arms folded and his eyes fixed on the ground for above a quarter of an hour, and then, suddenly rousing himself, tendered his assistance in attempting to awaken the husband. His harsh voice and rough gestures accomplished what the whispered persuasion of the wife had been unable to effect. Hamilton awoke, emptied his glass, and they all left the apartment together: she studiously avoiding any contact with the man called Archer.

This little scene interested the observer much. He sat thinking upon what had passed, so long, that he was upwards of an hour later than usual in reaching home. He felt a strong inclination to speak to Hamilton, and kindly but firmly to tell him what he had seen and what he thought. On consideration however, he determined not to interfere, deeming it more prudent to leave the issue to the good sense and proper feeling of his wife, who evidently knew what danger threatened her, and how to avert it.

The situation of these persons had occupied so much of his thoughts, that when he called as usual at the tavern next night, he felt a strong anxiety to meet them there again. He was disappointed, for Hamilton was seated in the room alone. He nodded as Grimaldi entered, and said,

"Are you going to Finchley to-night?"

"No," was the reply. "I wish I was: I have an engagement at my house here in town which will prevent my doing so."

"I thought you always went there on summer evenings," said Hamilton, glancing over the paper as he spoke, and speaking in an uninterested and careless style.

"No, not always," said Grimaldi: "pretty nearly though—five nights out of six."

"Then you'll go to-morrow?" asked Hamilton.

"Oh, certainly! to-morrow, and every night this week except to-night."

They exchanged a "good-evening!" and parted.

It so happened that Grimaldi was reluctantly obliged to remain in town, not only next night, but the night after also, in consequence of the arrival in town of some country friends. On the third night, the 9th of July, he called at the tavern to take his usual glass, before mounting his gig, and, his mind being still occupied with thoughts of the poor young woman and her dissipated husband, he inquired whether Hamilton had been there that night. The reply was, that he had not: he had not

been there for three evenings, or, in other words, since he had seen and spoken to him.

When Grimaldi produced his purse to pay for the wine and water he had drunk, he found he had nothing but two five-pound notes. He gave the waiter one, requesting change, and put the other in his waistcoat pocket. He usually carried notes in a pocket-book, but upon this evening he did not happen to have it about him; in fact, he had received the notes very unexpectedly while he was in the theatre, from a person who owed him money. He put the change in his purse, got into the gig, and drove homeward.

On that particular evening Grimaldi had a call to make in Tottenham Court Road, which delayed him for some little time. As he was passing through Kentish Town, a friend who was standing at his door, the weather being sultry, insisted upon his coming in and taking a glass of wine: this detained him again, as they stood chatting for half an hour or so, and by the time he had resumed his journey homewards it was near the middle of the night.

CHAPTER XVI.

1809.

His Adventure on Highgate Hill, and its consequences.

It was a fine, clear night; there was no moon, but the stars were shining brightly; the air was soft and fresh, and very pleasant after the heat of the day. Grimaldi drove on at a quicker pace than usual, fearing that they might be alarmed at home by his being so late, and having just heard some distant clock strike the three quarters after eleven. Suddenly the horse stopped.

Near the spot was a ridge across the road for the purpose of draining the fields on the higher side, forming a little hollow, which in the summer was dry, and in the winter generally full of mud. The horse knew it well, being accustomed to pause there for a minute, to cross the ditch slowly, and then to resume his usual trot. Bending forward to assure himself that he had arrived at this part of the road, Grimaldi heard a low whistle, and immediately afterwards three men darted out of a hedge. One seized the horse's bridle, and the two others rushed up, one to each side of the gig; then, presenting pistols, they demanded his money.

Grimaldi sat for a moment quite incapable of speaking, the surprise had come so suddenly upon him; but hearing the cocking of a pistol close beside him, he roused himself, and, seeing that he had no chance against three armed men, cried,

"Mercy, gentlemen, mercy!"

"You won't be hurt," said the man on his left, "so long as you give your money directly."

"No, no," said the man on his right, "you won't be hurt. Your money is what we want."

"You shall have it," he answered; "but I expect you not to injure me." He fumbled at his pocket for his purse, and while doing so looked narrowly at the persons by whom he was attacked. They all wore black crape over their faces, so that not a feature was discernible, and were clad in very large black frocks. The disguises were complete; it was impossible to make out anything of their appearance.

"Look sharp!" said the left-hand man; "the money!—come, we can't stay here."

Grimaldi extricated the purse and handed it to the speaker. The man at the horse's head looked sharply on, and cried,

"Tom, what has he given you?"

"His purse," was the reply.

"That won't do," said the man. "You have more money about you; I know you have: come, hand over, will ye?"

"I have not indeed," replied Grimaldi. "Sometimes I carry a little in my pocket-book; but to-night I forgot to bring it with me."

"You have more money with you, and you know it," said the man who held the bridle: "you have got a bank-note in your left-hand waistcoat pocket."

The circumstance had really escaped Grimaldi's memory; but being reminded of it, he drew forth the note and delivered it to the man to whom he had resigned his purse.

"It's all right, Tom," said the man on his right; "we had better be off now."

As the man spoke, he moved round the back of the gig, as if with the intention of going away. It was the first time he had uttered a word, and his voice struck Grimaldi as being a familiar one, though he could not in his confusion recollect where or when he had heard it. He had no time to reflect on the matter, for the man at the horse's head demanded of the man on his left whether he had got his watch.

"No," said the fellow, "I forgot his watch. Give it here!" With these words he again raised his pistol, which had been all this time and still was on full cock.

Grimaldi gave it up, but not without a sigh, for it was the very watch which had been presented to him with his own portrait on the dial-plate. As he put it into the man's hand, he said,

"If you knew who I am, you would not treat me in this manner."

"Oh, we know you well enough, Mr. Grimaldi," said the man at the reins: "we have been waiting for you these three nights, and began to think you would not come to-night."

The other men laughed, and the man whose voice had struck him, recommended his companion to give the watch back again.

"Oh yes, I dare say!" said the man with a sneer, who held the horse.

"Well, I don't know," said the fellow who had been addressed as "Tom,"—"I don't think it's worth a couple of pounds."

"No, no, it is not; and besides, I say he shall have it again," cried the man, whose voice, familiar at first, now seemed perfectly well known to Grimaldi. "Here!" He snatched the watch from his comrade's hand (who made no effort to retain it), and handed it into the gig. Grimaldi gladly received it back; but in the act of doing so, he saw that the hand from which he took it had, or appeared to have, *but two fingers upon it.*

The watch was no sooner returned than the robbers made off with great rapidity, and he was once again alone in a far greater state of alarm and trepidation than when the robbers surrounded him. The revulsion of feeling was so great, that he felt as if his existence depended upon instant flight, and that his flight would be far more speedy if he ran than if he rode. Acting upon the impulse of his disordered nerves, he sprang at once out of the gig, but not jumping sufficiently high to clear it, was thrown into the road head foremost with great force, and struck his temple heavily against a flint. The blow and the previous fright quite bewildered him, but did not render him insensible; he was up again directly, and found himself at the expiration of some ten minutes stopped by the patrol, to whom he was well known. He had no recollection of running, but he had run for a long distance, and the first thing he was conscious of, was being half supported by this man, and receiving many eager inquiries what had befallen him.

Grimaldi spoke as plainly as his agitation would permit, and related what had passed.

"Just what I have expected to happen to somebody for these many nights past," said the patrol. "Sir, I have watched those three men repeatedly; it was only last night I warned 'em that I did not like to see them loitering about my beat, and that if anything wrong happened I should suspect them. Make your mind easy, sir; I know where they are to be found, and I lay my life that in less than two hours I have them safe."

"And what am I to do?" Grimaldi inquired.

"Nothing to-night, sir," was the patrol's reply; "I would only recommend you to get home as fast as you can. At twelve o'clock to-morrow, you attend at Bow Street; and if I don't show you the men, I shall be as much surprised as you have been to-night."

The horse came up just then, having trotted on very composedly with the gig at his heels: taking the patrol's advice, Grimaldi got in, and having promised to meet him next morning, made the best of his way home, which he reached without further hindrance or interruption.

Grimaldi found his wife, as he had expected, very much terrified at his being so late; nor were her fears allayed by his wild demeanour and the appearance of the blow on his temple. To her hurried inquiries he gave the best answers that occurred to him, and being unwilling to give her any unnecessary alarm, merely remarked that he had a fall from his gig which had made him giddy and uncomfortable. The pains he afterwards took to keep the real truth from coming to her knowledge were infinite. Every newspaper that came into the house he carefully searched to ascertain that it contained no paragraph relative to the robbery, and so successful were his precautions, that she had not the least inkling of the circumstance until more than

two years afterwards, upon their giving up the cottage at Finchley and returning to town; when her first exclamation was, "Oh, Joe, if I had only known this at the time, I never could have slept another night in Finchley!"

This was exactly what Grimaldi had supposed, and he was not a little delighted to find, that he had been enabled to remain during the whole of that time in a place to which he was very much attached, and where, in the society of his wife and child, he had spent some of the happiest hours of his existence.

Grimaldi got very little sleep after the robbery, his thoughts turning all night upon the distressing consequences it seemed likely to involve. That Hamilton was one of the men, he felt pretty well sure: the voice and the defect in the left hand were strong proofs against him. Added to this, there was other evidence, circumstantial, it is true, but still very weighty. It was plain from the knowledge which one of the thieves possessed relative to the note, that he or some one connected with him had been at the tavern in the earlier part of the night, and had there closely watched his actions; the doubtful character of Archer, and his suspicious looks and manner, had struck him often; the thieves had been waiting three nights, and for three nights Hamilton had been absent from his usual place of resort. The more he thought of these things, the more sure he felt that Hamilton was a highwayman: then came the reflection, that if upon his evidence he was sentenced to death, it would most probably involve the fate of his young wife, of whose meekness and gentleness he had seen so many tokens. He tossed and tumbled through the night meditating upon these things over and over again; he rose the following morning feverish and dejected, trusting that the thieves might escape rather than that he should be the means of bringing any of his fellow-creatures to a violent death, or dooming others to living and hopeless wretchedness.

Pleading an early call to rehearsal as the reason for his going so early to town, he left Finchley immediately after breakfast, and drove to Bow Street, where he found the patrol already waiting. The moment he caught sight of the man and observed the air with which he approached to receive him, all the hopes which he had involuntarily nourished, evaporated, and he felt terrified at the thought that a capital prosecution at the Old Bailey was certainly reserved for him.

"Well, sir," said the man as he helped him out of the gig, "it's all right. I have got three men, and I have no doubt they are the fellows."

Grimaldi's distress was redoubled, and he inquired, trembling, whether any of the stolen property had been found upon them.

The man replied, with evident chagrin, that he had not succeeded so far, and therefore supposed that they had got rid of the booty before he found them; but if they were sworn to, they would be committed at once; and that when it was known among their companions, he had little doubt but that he should be able to trace out some evidence relative to the note. With this brief preparation he led Grimaldi at once into the presence of the magistrate, to whom he recounted the particulars of the robbery, hinting that as he had not been personally injured by the thieves, he had no wish to prosecute if it could be avoided;—an intimation to which the patrol listened in high dudgeon, and which the magistrate appeared to regard with some doubt, merely observing that the circumstance might possibly be taken into consideration with a view to the mitigation of punishment, but could not be urged or recognised at all in that stage of the proceedings.

The patrol was then examined, and, after stating in effect what he had stated to Grimaldi on the previous night, deposed that he had taken the prisoners into custody at a place which he named. The magistrate inquired whether any of the stolen property had been found upon them or traced, whether any such disguises as Mr. Grimaldi had described were discovered in their possession, and whether any suspicious implements offensive or defensive had been found upon them. To all these questions the patrol answered in the negative, and the magistrate then ordered that Grimaldi should be taken to view the prisoners. He also inquired if Grimaldi thought he should recognise them; who replied that he had no doubt he should know one of the men.

Grimaldi was taken into another room, and the first person he saw was, as he expected, George Hamilton himself: the other two prisoners were perfect strangers to him. They had described themselves to the magistrate as "gentlemen;" but he might have exclaimed, with young Mirabel, "For gentlemen they have the most cut-throat appearance I ever saw."

Hamilton behaved himself with great coolness and self-possession; he advanced without the least appearance of agitation, and said,

"How do you do, Mr. Grimaldi? It is an odd circumstance, is it not, that I should be charged with robbing an old friend like you? But strange coincidences happen to all of us."

Composed as the man's manner was, if Grimaldi had entered the room with any doubt of his guilt, it was at once and entirely dispelled. The practised eye of an old actor was not so easily deceived. He had evidently made a desperate effort to assume an easy confidence of manner, knowing that upon the success with which he did so, depended his only chance of escape from the gallows.

"Why, what's this?" said the gaoler or turnkey, or whoever had accompanied them to the room. "Do you know him, sir?"

"Yes," said Grimaldi, looking hard at Hamilton, "I know him very well."

"Well, then, sir, of course you can tell whether *he* is one of the men who robbed you?"

The pause which ensued was of not more than two or three seconds' duration, but it was a trying one to two of the parties present. Hamilton looked as if he awaited the reply without fear, and acted the innocent man boldly. The turnkey and constable turned away for an instant to speak to each other: and as they did so, Grimaldi held up his left hand, turning down two of the fingers, in imitation of Hamilton's, and shook his head gravely. The man instantly understood his meaning, and saw that he was known. All his assumed fortitude forsook him; his face became ashy pale, and his whole frame trembled with inward agitation. It appeared as if he would have fallen on the floor, but he rallied a little; and after bestowing a look of intense supplication upon Grimaldi, laid his finger on his lip, and fixed his eyes on the ground.

"Well, sir," said the patrol, "there they are; can you swear to them all, or to any of them?"

A thousand thoughts crowded through Grimaldi's brain, but one was uppermost,—the desire to save this young man, whom he strongly suspected to be but a beginner in crime. After a moment's pause, he replied, that he could not swear to any one of them.

"Then," said the turnkey to the patrol, with a meaning look, "either you have gone upon a wrong scent altogether, or these chaps have had a very narrow escape."

After informing the magistrate that it was not in his power to identify the prisoners, Grimaldi hurried away. The men were discharged in the course of the afternoon, and thus terminated the interview at the police-office.

A day or two afterwards, Hamilton called at Grimaldi's house, and, in a conversation with him, humbly acknowledged that he was one of the men who had robbed him; that he had been incited to the act partly by the anxiety to acquire money faster than he could make it in trade, and partly by the persuasions of his friend Archer; but that it was his first attempt at crime, and should be his last. He thanked his benefactor in the warmest and most grateful manner for his clemency. Grimaldi then acquainted him with the designs of Archer upon his wife, severely reprobating the vicious habits which had led him to abandon one by whose means he might have been rendered happy and respectable, and saved from his guilty career, and leaving her exposed to the insults of men inured to every species of villany and crime. Hamilton assured him that neither his information nor his advice was ill bestowed, and after a long interview they parted, he pouring forth his thanks and promises of reformation, and Grimaldi repeating his forgiveness and his admonitions.

Grimaldi had reason to hope that Hamilton kept his promise and shrunk from his old associates, for he resided nearly twenty years after that period in Clerkenwell, carrying on a good business, and bearing the reputation of an honest man.

At this time Grimaldi was in the habit of taking three benefits every year; that is to say, two at Sadlers Wells, and one at Covent Garden. Regularly on the morning of each of these occasions, for very many years, some person called at his house for ten box-

tickets, always paying for them at the time in exactly the amount required, and leaving the house immediately, as if anxious to avoid notice. He was in the constant habit of receiving anonymous remittances for tickets, and therefore did not attach much importance to this circumstance, although it struck him as being singular in one respect, inasmuch as the greater part of his friends who took tickets for his Sadlers Wells benefits did not take them on his Covent Garden nights, and *vice versa*. The family became at last so used to it, that when they were sorting tickets on the night before one of his benefits, his wife would regularly say, "Don't forget to put ten on the mantelpiece for the gentleman who calls early in the morning." This continued for perhaps twelve years or more, when one day, as his servant was giving him the money paid as usual by the unknown person for his admissions, he casually inquired of the girl what kind of person in appearance this gentleman was.

"Oh, I really don't know, sir," she replied; "there is nothing particular about him, except——"

"Well, except what?"

"Except, sir, that he has only got two fingers on his left hand."

The mystery was explained.

The fate of this man was truly pitiable. A neighbour's house having taken fire and being in imminent hazard of destruction, Hamilton rushed in with several others to save some children who were in danger of perishing in the flames. He darted up stairs through the smoke and reached the second storey. The instant he set his foot upon it, the whole flooring gave way, and sank with him into the mass of glowing fire below, from which his body, burnt to a cinder, was dug out some days afterwards.

CHAPTER XVII.

1809 to 1812.

Opening of the new Covent Garden Theatre.—The great O. P. Rows.—Grimaldi's first appearance as Clown in the public streets.—Temporary Embarrassments.—Great success at Cheltenham and Gloucester.—He visits Berkeley Castle, and is introduced to Lord Byron.—Fish Sauce and Apple Pie.

ON the 18th of September in this year the new theatre in Covent Garden opened with Shakspeare's tragedy of Macbeth and the musical afterpiece of The Quaker, with the following casts:—

MACBETH.

Duncan, King of Scotland	Mr. Chapman.
Malcolm	Mr. Claremont.
Donaldbain	Mr. Menage.
Macbeth	Mr. John Kemble.
Banquo	Mr. Murray.
Fleance	Miss Bristow.
Lenox	Mr. Creswell.
Rosse	Mr. Brunton.
Witches	Messrs. Blanchard, Farley, and Simmons.
Lady Macbeth	Mrs. Siddons.

THE QUAKER.

Steady	Mr. Incledon.
Lubin	Mr. Taylor.
Solomon	Mr. Liston.
Gillian	Miss Bolton.
Floretta	Mrs. Liston.

It was at this period that the great O. P. Row began, of which so much has been said, and sung, and written, that little of novelty or interest could accompany the description of it here. Everybody knows that the O. P. Row originated in the indignation with which the play-going public regarded an increase in the prices of admission of one shilling each person to the boxes, and sixpence to the pit, with which was coupled a considerable increase in the number of private boxes; and everybody knows, moreover, that the before-mentioned play-going public expressed their dissatisfaction night after night in scenes of the most extraordinary and unparalleled nature. The noises made by the audience utterly overwhelmed every attempt that the actors could make to render themselves audible. Not a word that was said on the stage could be distinguished even in the front row of the pit, and the O. P. (Old Price) rioters, fearful that the exercise of their voices would not create a sufficient uproar, were in the habit of bringing the most extraordinary variety of curious and ill-toned instruments with them, to add to the noise and discordance of the scene. One gentleman, who constantly seated himself in the boxes, regaled himself and the company with a watchman's rattle, which he sprang vigorously at short intervals throughout the performance; another took his seat regularly every night in the centre of the pit, armed with a large dustman's bell, which he rang with a perseverance and strength of arm quite astounding to all beholders;* and a party of three or four pleasant fellows brought live pigs, which were pinched at the proper times, and added considerably to the effect of the performances.

But rattles, bells, pigs, trumpets, French horns, sticks, umbrellas, catcalls, and bugles were not the only vocal weapons used upon these occasions. Kemble was constantly called for, constantly came on, and constantly went off again without being able to obtain a hearing. Numbers of Bow Street officers were in regular attendance; whenever they endeavoured to seize the ringleaders, the ringleaders were defended by their partisans, and numerous fights (in one of which a man was nearly killed) resulted. Scarce an evening passed without flaming speeches being made from pit, boxes, and gallery; and sometimes half a dozen speeches would be in course of delivery at the same time. The greater portion of the time of the magistrates was occupied in investigations connected with the disturbances, and this state of things continued for nearly seventy nights. Placards were exhibited in every part of the house, principally from the pit; of the quality of which effusions, the following may be taken as specimens:—

"*Notice to the Public.*—This house and furniture to be sold—Messrs. John Kemble and Co. declining business."

"*Notice to the Public.*—The workhouse in Covent Garden has been repaired and greatly enlarged for the use of the public."

"*Cause of Justice.*—John Bull *versus* John Kemble—verdict for the plaintiff"

A large coffin, with the inscription, "Here lies the body of New Prices, who died of the *whooping*-cough, Sept. 23, 1809, aged six days."

The instant the performances began, the audience, who had been previously sitting with their faces to the stage as audiences generally do, wheeled round to a man, and turned their backs upon it. When they concluded, which, in consequence of the fearful uproar, was frequently as early as half-past nine o'clock, they united in singing a parody on "God Save the King," of which the first verse ran thus:

> "God save great Johnny Bull,
> Long live our noble Bull,
> God save John Bull!
> Send him victorious,
> Loud and uproarious,
> With lungs like Boreas:
> God save John Bull!"

Then followed the O. P. dance and a variety of speeches, and then the rioters would quietly disperse.

The opinions of the press being, as a matter of course, divided on every question, were necessarily divided upon this. The Times and Post supported the new system; in consequence of which a placard was exhibited from the pit every evening for at least a week, with the inscription,—

> "The Times and Post are bought and sold,
> By Kemble's pride and Kemble's gold."

* The gentleman who made notes of Grimaldi's recollections subjoins a note to the effect, that the gentleman who rang the bell is a personal acquaintance of his, and that he has repeatedly heard him mention the circumstance, which he looks back upon now, as an act of thoughtless folly, but which he considered then as the performance of a sacred duty to the public. He was at that time in his nonage, studying (after a manner) the law; he is now, and has long been, editor of a newspaper published in Sussex.

The Chronicle, on the other hand, took up the opposite side of the question, and supported the O. P. rioters with great fervour and constancy. In its columns one of the most popular of the numerous squibs on the subject appeared, which is here inserted. It may be necessary to premise that "Jack" was John Kemble; that the "Cat" was Madame Catalani, then engaged at Covent Garden Theatre, and who was much opposed at that time in consequence of her being a foreigner; and that the "boxes" were the new private boxes, among the great objects of popular execration.

"THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

"This is the House that Jack built.

"These are the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"These are the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is the Cat, engaged to squall to the poor, in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is John Bull, with a bugle-horn, that hissed the Cat, engaged to squall to the poor in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is the thief-taker, shaven and shorn,
That took up John Bull, with his bugle-horn,
who hissed the Cat, engaged to squall to the poor in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is the manager, full of scorn,
Who RAISED THE PRICES to the people forlorn,
And directed the thief-taker, shaven and shorn,
To take up John Bull, with his bugle-horn,
who hissed the Cat, engaged to squall to the poor in the pigeon-holes, over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built."

When this had gone on for several nights Kemble sent for Grimaldi, and said, that as the people would not hear dialogue, they would try pantomime, which might perhaps suit their tastes better, and accordingly Don Juan was put up for the next night, Grimaldi sustaining his old part of Scaramouch. He was received on his entrance with great applause, and it happened oddly enough that on that night there was little or no disturbance. This circumstance, which he naturally attributed in some degree to himself, pleased him amazingly, as indeed it did Kemble also, who, shaking him cordially by the hand when he came off, said, "Bravo, Joe! we have got them now: we'll act this again tomorrow night." And so they did; but it appeared that they had not "got them" either, for the uproar recommenced with, if possible, greater fury than before, all the performers agreeing that until that moment they had never heard such a mighty and indescribable din.

Eventually, on the 15th of December, the famous O. P. row terminated, on the proprietors of the theatre lowering the charge of admission to the pit, removing the obnoxious private boxes, rescinding Madame Catalani's engagement, discharging Mr. James Brandon, house and box book-keeper, who had rendered himself greatly offensive to the O. P. people, abandoning all prosecutions against those who had been required to answer for their misconduct at the sessions, and offering a public apology. The ungracious task of making it fell upon Mr. Kemble, who delivered what it was deemed necessary to say, with remarkable self-possession and dignity. It was received by the audience with great applause, and a placard was immediately hoisted in the pit, bearing the words, "We are satisfied;" it was speedily followed by a similar announcement in the boxes; and thus terminated the famous O. P. war, wholly unparalleled in dramatic or indeed in any other annals.

At Christmas, "Harlequin Pedlar, or the Haunted Well," was produced: it met with very great success, being played fifty-two nights. In March 1810 Grimaldi first appeared as Skirmish in "The Deserter of Naples;" and "Mother Goose" was again played. The theatre closed in July, and re-opened in October. Nothing particularly new was done that season at Sadlers Wells; at Christmas 1810, he appeared, as usual, in the Covent Garden pantomime, which was called "Harlequin Asmodeus, or Cupid on Crutches." It was acted for forty-six nights, and was played occasionally until May 1811.

During this month he had to play Clown at both theatres, the pantomime being acted as the first piece at Sadlers Wells, and as the last piece at Covent Garden. Not having time to change his dress, and indeed having no reason for doing so, if he had, in consequence of his playing the same character at both houses, he was accustomed to have a coach in waiting, into which he threw himself the moment he had finished at Sadlers Wells, and was straightway carried to Drury Lane to begin again.

One night it so happened that, by some forgetfulness or mistake on the part of the driver, the coach which usually came for him failed to make its appearance. It was a very wet night, and not having a moment to lose, he sent for another. After a considerable interval, during which he was in an agony of fear lest the Covent Garden stage should be kept waiting, the messenger returned in a breathless state with the information that there was not a coach to be got. There was only one desperate alternative, and that was to run through the streets. Knowing that his appearance at Covent Garden must by this time be necessary, he made up his mind to do it, and started off at once.

The night being very dark, he got on pretty well at first; but when he came into the streets of Clerkenwell, where the lights in the shops showed him in his Clown's dress running along at full speed, people began to grow rather astonished. First, a few people turned round to look after him, and then a few more, and so on until there were a great many, and at last, one man who met him at a street corner, recognising the favourite, gave a loud shout of, "Here's Joe Grimaldi!"

This was enough. Off set Grimaldi faster than ever, and on came the mob, shouting, huzzaing, screaming out his name, throwing up their caps and hats, and exhibiting every manifestation of delight. He ran into Holborn with several hundred people at his heels, and being lucky enough to find a coach there, jumped in. But this only increased the pressure of the crowd, who followed the vehicle with great speed and perseverance; when suddenly poking his head out of the window, he gave one of his famous and well-known laughs. Upon this the crowd raised many roars of laughter and applause, and hastily agreed, as with one accord, that they would see him safe and sound to Covent Garden. So, the coach went on surrounded by the dirtiest bodyguard that was ever beheld, not one of whom deserted his post, until Grimaldi had been safely deposited at the stage-door; when, after raising a vociferous cheer, such of them as had money rushed round to the gallery doors, and making their appearance in the front just as he came on the stage, set up a boisterous shout of "Here he is again!" and cheered him enthusiastically to the infinite amusement of every person in the theatre who had got wind of the story.

In the season of 1811, "The Great Devil" was revived at Sadlers Wells: he played a part in it in which he was highly successful and applauded to the very echo. In July, he injured his chest severely, by falling upon a tight-rope, and was obliged for several weeks to give up all his theatrical engagements. He reappeared at Covent Garden in October following, playing in Asmodeus, Mother Goose, Valentine and Orson, and Raymond and Agnes; in the latter piece he supported, for the first time, the part of Robert. On the 26th of December the new pantomime appeared; it was called "Harlequin and Padmanaba, or the Golden Fish," and went off very well.

One of his earlier appearances in the regular drama occurred in the following June (1812), when, for his own benefit, he played Acres in "The Rivals." The house was a very good one, and he cleared upwards of two hundred pounds by it.

This year was rendered remarkable to him by some temporary embarrassments into which he was plunged, partly, he says, by the great expense consequent upon keeping a country as well as a town house, and partly by the great extravagance of his wife, who, although an excellent woman, had, like everybody else, some fault:—hers was a love of dress which almost amounted to a mania. Finding that retrenchment must be the order of the day, he gave up his house at Finchley, discharged his groom, sold his horse and gig, and placed his affairs in the hands of Mr. Harmer, the solicitor, to whom circumstances had so oddly introduced him a few years before. Seven or eight months served to bring

affairs into the right train again; by the end of that time every one of his creditors had been paid to the last penny of their demands.

In 1812 there was nothing particularly worthy of notice at Sadlers Wells. His second benefit, which took place in October, was a great one, the receipts being two hundred and twenty-five pounds. It was supposed that the theatre would not hold more than two hundred pounds, but no benefit of his ever brought him less than two hundred and ten; and indeed one, which we shall presently have occasion to mention, produced nearly two hundred and seventy pounds;—whether those who contributed this sum were all in the theatre at one period or not, we cannot of course pretend to say.

In the latter end of this month, he entered into an engagement to perform for two nights with Mr. Watson, of the Cheltenham theatre, who arranged to give him a clear half of whatever the receipts might be. Previously to leaving town, he consulted with Mr. Hughes about this speculation, who told him that Cheltenham was a bad theatrical town, on account of its having many other amusements; but still he fancied he might clear his expenses, and perhaps forty or fifty pounds besides. At the appointed time he left London, having received a species of half-notice from Mr. Harris that he would not be wanted at Covent Garden; and on the next night, played Scaramouch and sang Tippitywitchit with great *éclat* at Cheltenham. The following evening he played Clown in a little pantomime of his own concoction.

The house was full on each occasion, the performances gave perfect satisfaction, and he was induced by the manager to stay in that part of the country two days longer, and to go to Gloucester (nine miles off), at which place he likewise had a theatre. Thither they started early on the following morning, played the same pieces as at Cheltenham, and met with an equal degree of success.

After the performances were over, Mr. Watson and he supped together; and when the cloth was removed, he said,

"Now, Joe, I can only allow you to take one glass of punch, time is so very precious."

"I do not understand you," replied Grimaldi.

"Why, what I mean is, that it is now twelve o'clock, and time to go to bed," he answered.

"Oh, with all my heart," said Grimaldi. "But this is something new, I suspect, with you. Last night, I remember, it was three hours later than this before you suffered me to retire; and the night previous it was later even than that."

"Ay, ay," returned Watson; "but to-night we had perhaps better get to bed soon, as to-morrow I want you to go out rather early with me."

"What do you call rather early?" inquired Grimaldi.

"Why, let me see,—we must start before three," answered the manager.

"Indeed!" said Grimaldi; "then I shall wish you good-night at once;" and so saying, without any loss of time he went to his chamber. After they had stepped into a chaise next day, he found that their destination was Berkeley Castle, to which its host had sent them a special invitation, and that their morning's amusement was to consist of coursing.

He had the honour of an acquaintance with Colonel Berkeley (now Lord Segrave), at whose table he was occasionally in the habit of dining, and upon their arrival at the castle was most hospitably received. The castle was full of company. Several noblemen were there, as well as distinguished commoners: among the former was Lord Byron, whom he had frequently seen, and who always patronised his benefits at Covent Garden, but with whom he had never conversed. Colonel Berkeley introduced him to such of the company as he was unacquainted with, and, in common with the rest, to Lord Byron, who instantly advanced towards him, and, making several low bows, expressed in very hyperbolical terms his "great and unbounded satisfaction in becoming acquainted with a man of such rare and profound talents," &c. &c.

Perceiving that his lordship was disposed to be facetious at his expense, Grimaldi felt half inclined to reply in a similar strain; but, reflecting that he might give offence by doing so, abstained—resolving, however, not to go entirely unrevenged for the joke which he was evidently playing him. He returned all the bows and congees threefold, and, as soon as the ceremonious introduction was over, made a face at Colonel Berkeley, expressive of mingled gratification and suspicion, which threw those around into a roar of laughter, while Byron, who did not see it, looked round for the cause of the merriment in a manner which redoubled it at once.

"Grimaldi," said the Colonel, "after breakfast, at which meal we expect your company and that of Mr. Watson, you shall have a course with the greyhounds yonder; then you must return and dine with us. We will have dinner early, so that you can reach the theatre in time to perform."

To this, he had no further reply to make, than to express his gratitude for such consideration and kindness. After they had taken a plentiful meal, they went out with the dogs and had some famous sport. Hares were so plentiful that they started twenty-seven in one field; and the day being fine and the novelty great, Grimaldi was highly delighted with the proceedings.

Upon their return to the castle, they found most of the party with whom they had breakfasted assembled together, and shortly afterwards they sat down to dinner. Lord Byron sat upon Grimaldi's left, and a young nobleman whom he knew very well from his being constantly behind the scenes at Covent Garden, but whose name he could not recollect, on his right.

"Grimaldi," whispered this young nobleman, just as dinner commenced, "did you ever meet Byron before?"

"Never, my lord," answered Grimaldi: "that is, never to converse with him."

"Then, of course you have not met him at a dinner-party."

"Never, my lord."

"Well, then," continued the young gentleman, who, as anybody but Grimaldi would have seen, was playing on his simplicity in conjunction with Lord Byron, "I will tell you why I asked these questions: I was anxious if you should chance not to know his lordship's peculiarities, to point out to you one trifling but still distinguishing one, to which if you happen to oppose yourself, he will infallibly take a dislike to you; and I need not assure you that it is always best for a public character to be on good terms rather than bad with such men."

Grimaldi bowed his thanks, and really did feel very grateful.

"What I allude to, is simply this," added his noble friend: "Byron is very courteous at the dinner-table, but does not like to have his courtesy thrown away or slighted; I would recommend you, if he asks you to take anything, as he is almost sure to do, no matter whether it be to eat or drink, not to refuse."

"I am very much obliged to you, my lord," was Grimaldi's reply: "in fact, I look upon your kindness as a great personal favour, and I shall carefully act upon your recommendation."

And so he did, and so indeed he had plenty of opportunities of doing; for Lord Byron asked him to partake of so many things, none of which he liked to decline, that at last he was quite gorged, and was almost fearful that if it lasted much longer, he should be unable to perform that night at Gloucester.

Towards the end of the repast his lordship invited him to eat a little apple-tart, which he thought he could manage, the more especially as he was very fond of it; he therefore acquiesced with many thanks, and the tart being placed before him, commenced operations. Byron looked at him for a moment, and then said, with much seeming surprise,

"Why, Mr. Grimaldi, do you not take soy with your tart?"

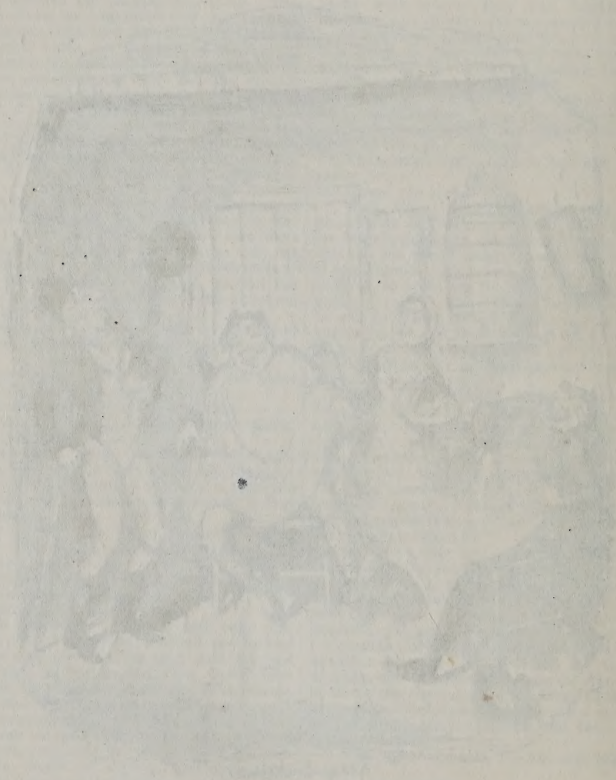
"Soy, my lord?"

"Yes, soy: it is very good with salmon, and therefore it must be nice with apple-pie."

Poor Grimaldi did not see the analogy, and was upon the point of saying so; but his friend on his right touched his elbow, when, recollecting what he had previously communicated, he bowed assent to Byron's proposal and proceeded to pour some of the fish-sauce over the tart. After one or two vain attempts to swallow a mouthful of the vile mess, he addressed Lord Byron with considerable formality, begging to observe that no one could do more justice than himself to his kindness, but that he really trusted he would forgive his declining to eat the mixture he had recommended, as, however much the confession might savour of bad taste, he really did not relish soy with apple-tart.

He was much relieved by Byron's taking the apology in very good part, and by the rest of the company laughing most heartily—at what, he says, he cannot possibly tell, *unless* it had been determined to put a joke upon him. We should imagine it had been, but in any case should be strongly disposed to say that a great deal

THE BARBER'S SHOP. (See p. 89.)



more of innate politeness was displayed on the side of simplicity than on that of nobility.

Shortly afterwards they took their leave and returned to Gloucester, where they found the theatre crowded as before. The performances went off as well as possible, and after all was over Watson presented him with one hundred and ninety-five pounds as his share.

At seven o'clock next morning he was on his road to London, where he arrived that night.

Early on the following morning he waited upon his friend Mr. Hughes, and having reminded him that "Cheltenham was a very bad theatrical town, on account of its spas and other amusements, but that still it was possible forty or fifty pounds might be made there," triumphantly exhibited his one hundred and ninety-five pounds.

In the evening he called at Covent Garden, and saw Mr. H. Harris, who informed him that Mr. Diamond of the Bath and Bristol theatres wished to engage him for five weeks,—that his terms were twenty-five pounds per week, with half a clear benefit at each of the places named, and that if he liked to go he was at perfect liberty to do so, the proprietors of Covent Garden not needing his services until Christmas. His salary was to be paid, however, just as though he were performing.

Of this liberality he gladly availed himself, and, after expressing his gratitude, wrote to Diamond, accepting the proposal. A week after he had returned from Gloucester, he left town for Bath.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1812 to 1816.

A Clergyman's Dinner-party at Bath.—First Appearance of Grimaldi's Son, and Death of his old friend Mr. Hughes.—Grimaldi plays at three Theatres on one night, and has his Salary stopped for his pains.—His severe illness.—Second journey to Bath.—Davidge, "Billy Coombes," and the Chest.—Facetiousness of the aforesaid Billy.

Two days after his arrival in Bath he appeared at the theatre, where he was fortunate enough to elicit the warmest applause and approbation from a crowded audience;—nor was he less successful at Bristol, the theatre being completely filled every night he performed. He remained in this part of the country during five weeks, playing four nights in every week at Bath, and the remaining two at Bristol. By this trip he realized 287*l.*—125*l.* for salary and 162*l.* for benefits; but although it was a lucrative expedition, it was by no means a pleasant one, the weather being exceedingly inclement, and he being compelled to return to Bath every evening after the performances at Bristol were over. The nightly rides at that season of the year were by no means agreeable; he suffered very much from colds, and, upon the whole, was very far from sorry when his engagement terminated.

During his stay at Bath a little incident happened, developing, in a striking point of view, a very repulsive trait of discourtesy and bad breeding in a quarter where, least of any, such an exhibition might have been looked for.

Higman, the bass singer, who was then in great repute, and was afterwards the original Gabriel in Guy Mannering, but is since dead, was invited with Grimaldi to dine with a reverend gentleman of that city. They accepted the invitation, and upon their arrival found a pretty large party of gentlemen assembled, the clerical host of course presiding. The very instant the cloth was removed this gentleman commanded, rather than asked, Higman to sing a song. Not wishing to appear desirous of enhancing the merit of the song by frivolous objections, he at once consented, although he had scarcely swallowed his meal. It was deservedly very much applauded and complimented, and the moment the applause had ceased, the reverend doctor turned to Grimaldi and in the same peremptory manner requested a song from him. He begged leave to decline for the present, urging what was indeed the truth, that he had scarcely swallowed his dinner. The observation made by the host in reply rather astonished him.

"What, Mr. Grimaldi!" he exclaimed hastily, "not sing, sir! Why, I asked you here, sir, to-day, expressly to sing."

"Indeed, sir!" said Grimaldi, rising from the table: "then I heartily wish you had said so when you gave me the invitation; in which case you would have saved me the inconvenience of coming here to-day, and prevented my wishing you, as I now beg to do, a very unceremonious good night." With these words he left the apartment, and very soon afterwards the house.

It may appear to a great many persons a remarkable circumstance that a pantomime Clown should have been called upon to read a lesson of politeness and common decency to a reverend divine. The circumstance, however, happened literally as it is here narrated. A somewhat similar story has been told of another well-known actor; but this rudeness, whether it arose in ignorance or intention, was offered to Grimaldi by the reverend gentleman in question, whose name he well remembered, but which we abstain from mentioning.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was entitled "Harlequin and the Red Dwarf, or the Adamant Rock:" it was entirely successful. On Easter Monday 1813, the melo-drama of "Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp," written by Mr. Farley, was acted for the first time, Grimaldi playing the character of Kasrac, a dumb slave, which became one of his most popular characters. The Sadlers Wells season merits no further notice than that, as usual, it was very profitable, and that Grimaldi produced a dance called "Fun and Physic," which was performed every night.

Covent Garden reopened in September, and this year he was in constant requisition before Christmas, as well as after, Aladdin being found an extremely profitable piece. "Harlequin and the Swans, or the Bath of Beauty," was produced at Christmas, and followed at Easter by Sadak and Kalasrade, in which Grimaldi played Hassan.

Having now none of those amusements which in former years had served to employ his idle hours—having lost his flies, given up his pigeons, removed from Finchley, sold his house, and resigned his garden, he devoted the whole of his leisure time to the society and improvement of his son. As he could not bear to part with him, and was wholly unable to make up his mind to send him to any great boarding-school, he was partly educated at the same school at which his father had been a pupil, and partly by masters who attended him at home. The father appears to have bestowed great and praiseworthy care upon his education. Although at this time he was only twelve years old, he had not only quite mastered the common rudiments of learning, but had become well acquainted with French literature, and wrote the language with ease and propriety. He had at a very early age manifested a great fondness for music, especially the violin, and had acquired great proficiency on that instrument under the tuition of one of the first masters in the country.

As he was a very clever boy, was an excellent dancer, and displayed a great fondness and aptitude for the stage, his father, finding that his inclinations lay irrevocably that way, determined to encourage them, and accordingly proceeded to instruct him in melodrama and pantomime. He fancied that in his old age, when his own heyday of fame and profit was over, he should gather new life from the boy's success, and that old times would be called up vividly before him when he witnessed his popularity in characters which had first brought his father before the public, and enabled him gradually, after the loss of his property, to acquire an independent and respectable station in society. The wish was a natural one, and the old man cherished it dearly for many years. It was decreed otherwise; and although in his better days the blight of this hope caused him great grief and misery, he endeavoured to bear it with humility and resignation.

On the 26th of April he resumed his labours at Sadlers Wells. He acted in a drama called the "Slave Pirate," which was successful. His first benefit brought him £216, and his second £263 10*s.*; the last-named, being the best he had ever had at that house.

The great attraction of this benefit of 1814 was the first appearance on any stage of his son, who performed Friday in "Robinson Crusoe," Grimaldi playing the latter part himself, and thus introducing his son to the public in the same piece in which his father had brought him forward thirty-three years before. For six weeks previous to the *début*, the pains he had taken to render him master of the character, and the drillings he gave him were innumerable, although they rather arose from the nervousness of the father than from any lack of intelligence on the part of the son, who not only rapidly acquired the instructions communicated to him, but in many instances improved upon them considerably. His intended appearance was kept a profound secret until within a week of the night on which he was to perform;

and when the announcement was at length made, the demand for tickets and places was immense. The result was, that the benefit not only turned out (as has been already mentioned) the best Grimaldi ever had, but the reception of the son was enthusiastic, and his exertions were both applauded by the public and commended in the newspapers. It may appear a mere matter of course to say that the father considered the performance the best that he had ever seen; but long afterwards, when the boy was dead, and censure or praise was alike powerless to assist or harm him, Grimaldi expressed, in the same strong terms, his high opinion of his abilities, and his conviction that had he been only moderate and temperate in the commonest degree, he must in a few years have equalled, if not greatly excelled, anything which he himself had achieved in his very best days.

On the 20th of December following, he sustained a severe loss in the death of his constant and sincere friend Mr. Richard Hughes, who had been his well-wisher and adviser from infancy, and whose relationship to his first wife gave him a strong and lasting claim on his regard. As another instance of the severe mental trials which an actor has to undergo, it may be mentioned that during the time his friend was lying dead, he was engaged for many hours each day in rehearsing broadly-humorous pantomime, and that as if to render the contrast more striking, the burial being fixed for the 26th of the month, he was compelled to rehearse part of his Clown's character on the stage, to run to the funeral, to get back from the churchyard to the theatre to finish the rehearsal, and to exert all his comic powers at night to set the audience in a roar.

This pantomime was founded upon the story of Whittington and his Cat, and had a very extended run. On the night of its production his spirits were so affected by the calamity he had sustained, that it was with great difficulty he could go through his part, in which he had very nearly failed. He succeeded by a strong effort in finishing the piece; and although his health paid very dearly for this and other efforts of the same nature, the constant bustle and excitement of his professional duties aided in recovering him and enabling him to act with his accustomed vivacity.

The harlequinade of "The Talking Bird" was produced at Sadlers Wells this season, in which he first enacted the Bird and afterwards the Clown. During the run of this pantomime he performed the remarkable feat of playing three very heavy parts, (two of them Clowns,) at three different theatres on the same night. He was intimately acquainted with a Mr. Hayward, who being married to a clever actress at the Surrey, one Miss Dely, begged him as a great favour to act for her at that theatre on her benefit night. He asked and obtained permission from the proprietor of Sadlers Wells, but could not do the same at Covent Garden, as Mr. Harris was absent from town. He did not think it a point of any great importance, however, inasmuch as he had not been called upon to act for some time, and nothing was then announced in which it was at all likely he would be wanted. Unfortunately on the very night of the benefit, "La Perouse," in which he acted, was advertised at Covent Garden. In this dilemma, he hurried over the water, explained the circumstance, and pointed out the impossibility of his performing at the Surrey.

But the Surrey people who had advertised him stoutly contending that there was no impossibility in the case, assured him that all would be right; that he should play there first, then go to Sadlers Wells, and then to Covent Garden to finish the evening. To the end that he should be in good time at each house, it was proposed that a chaise, with the best horses that could be procured, should be provided, and held in readiness to carry him at the greatest possible speed from place to place.

Not having the heart to disappoint the parties interested, he consented to this arrangement. At the Surrey, he played with Bologna in the pantomime: the moment it was over, he jumped into a chaise and four that was waiting at the door, and started for Sadlers Wells. Bologna accompanied him to see the issue of the proceeding, and, by dashing through the streets at a most extraordinary pace, they reached Sadlers Wells just at the very commencement of the overture for the pantomime. Hurrying to repaint his face, (which had been very much bedaubed by the rain, which poured upon it as he looked out of the chaise-window entreating the post-boys to drive a little slower,) and thrusting himself into the dress of the "Talking Bird," he was ready at the instant when the call-boy told him he was wanted. There still remained Covent Garden, and towards the close of the pantomime he grew very anxious, looking constantly towards the sides of the stage to see if Bologna were still there; for, as he was the Perouse of the night and was wanted a full half-hour before him, he felt something like security so long as he remained. At length the pantomime was over, and once more taking their seats in the same chaise, they drove at the same furious pace to Covent Garden, and were ready dressed and in the green-room before the first bars of the overture had been played. This change of dress assisted greatly in recovering him from his fatigue, and he went through the third part as well as the first, feeling no greater exhaustion at the close of the performances than was usual with him on an ordinary night. The only refreshment which he took during the whole evening was one glass of warm ale and a biscuit. He plumed himself very much on this feat; for although he had played Clown at two theatres for twenty-eight nights successively, he considered it something out of the common way, and triumphed in it greatly.

He had a specimen next day of the spirit which Fawcett still cherished towards him, and which, but for the kindness of Mr. Harris, might have injured him severely on many occasions. Applying, as usual, at the treasury for his weekly salary of ten pounds, he was informed by the treasurer, with great politeness and apparent regret, that he had received orders from Mr. Fawcett to stop it for that week. He instantly posted off in search of that gentleman, and upon finding him, requested to know why his salary was not to be paid.

"Because, sir," replied Mr. Fawcett,—"because you have thought fit to play at the Surrey Theatre without mentioning the matter to *us*, or asking *our* permission."

Grimaldi whistled a little to express his total unconcern, and, turning away, muttered, "For *us* and for *our* tragedy, thus stooping to your clemency, we beg your hearing patiently." In crossing the stage to the door, he met Mr. Harris, who had that instant entered the theatre, having arrived in town not ten minutes before. He shook him kindly by the hand, and inquired how he was.

"Why, sir," said Grimaldi, "I am as well as can be expected, considering that my salary has been stopped."

"Why, what have you been about, Joe?"

"Played for Mrs. Hayward's benefit at the Surrey, sir."

"Oh! without leave, I suppose?"

"Why sir," answered Grimaldi, "there was no one in the theatre who was, in my opinion, entitled actually to give or refuse leave: you were out of town; with Mr. Fawcett I have nothing to do—he has neither connexion with nor influence over my line of business, nor do I wish him to have any; Mr. Farley is the only gentleman under yourself whom I consider myself obliged to acknowledge as a superior here—and to him I did name it, and he told me to go, for I should not be wanted."

"Joe," said Mr. Harris after a moment's pause, "go to Brandon, and tell him to give you your money. And, mind, I've entered into an arrangement for you to go and see Diamond again in October, upon the same terms as before: so mind you go, and I'll take care you are neither fined nor wanted."

For this double liberality he expressed his best thanks, and returning to the treasury with the manager's message, received his salary and departed.

On the 15th of the next month his first benefit for that season took place at Sadlers Wells. He sustained the part of Don Juan; and his son, J. S. Grimaldi, played Scaramouch, being his second appearance. He acted the part capitally, and had a great reception, so that his father now in good earnest began to hope he would not only support the name of Grimaldi, but confer upon it increased popularity. The receipts of this night were 231*l.* 14*s.* Three months afterwards his second benefit occurred: Monday the 9th of October was the day fixed for it, but on the preceding Saturday he was suddenly seized with severe illness, originating in a most distressing impediment in his breathing. Medical assistance was immediately called in, and he was bled until nigh fainting. This slightly relieved him; but shortly afterwards he had a relapse, and four weeks passed before he recovered sufficiently to leave the house. There is no doubt but that some radical change had occurred in his constitution, for previously to this attack he had never been visited

with a single day's illness, while after its occurrence he never had a single day of perfect health.

On the Monday, finding it would be impossible for him to play, he procured a substitute, and immediately had bills printed and posted outside the theatre. His absence made a difference of about fifty pounds in the receipts; but as his son played Scaramouch, and played it well, he sustained no greater pecuniary loss, and had the satisfaction of hearing from all quarters that his son was rapidly improving.

After the lapse of a month Grimaldi became tolerably well, and as it was now time for him to keep his engagement with Diamond, he went to Bath in November, and remained there until the middle of December, occasionally acting at Bristol. The profits of this trip were two hundred and ninety-four pounds.

It was either during this provincial trip, or about this time, that he first became acquainted with Mr. Davidge, the lessee of the Surrey Theatre. He was then the Harlequin at Bath and Bristol, and although he has since become a round and magisterial figure, was then a very light and active pantomimist.

In the pantomimes Davidge was the Harlequin, and Grimaldi of course the Clown. They were accustomed to call the Pantaloon, who was a very indifferent actor, by the name of "Billy Coombes,"—why, they best knew, but it seems not to have been his real name. This worthy had given both Davidge and Grimaldi mighty offence upon several occasions, possibly by making his appearance on the stage in a state of intoxication. Grimaldi forgot the precise cause of affront, but, whatever it was, they deemed it a very great one, and Davidge upon several occasions took opportunities of hinting, in speeches fraught with determination and replete with a peculiar variety of expletives, "that he was resolved some time or other to be revenged upon that Billy Coombes."

One evening, while the pantomime was in progress and the two friends were exciting much mirth and applause, Davidge pointed to a chest which was used in the piece, and, whispering that there was a lock upon it with a key, remarked that Billy had to get into it directly, and asked whether it would not be a good joke to turn the key upon him. Grimaldi readily concurred, and no sooner was the unconscious Mr. Coombes beneath the lid of the chest, than he was locked in, amidst the plaudits of the audience, who thought it a capital trick. There were but two more scenes in the pantomime, which Davidge had to commence. Just as he was going on the stage, Grimaldi inquired whether he had let out the Pantaloon.

"No," he replied, hastily, "I have not, but I will, directly I come off." So saying, he danced upon the stage, followed by Grimaldi, and the usual buffeting ensued with the accustomed effect. The pantomime was over a few minutes afterwards, and Grimaldi, who felt very tired when he had gone through his part, in consequence of his recent illness, went straight home, and was in bed a very short time after the curtain fell.

There was a call the next morning for the rehearsal of a few new pantomime scenes which Grimaldi had prepared to vary the entertainment. As the Pantaloon was not forthcoming, however, they could not be gone through with any useful effect. When Davidge arrived, Grimaldi mentioned the circumstance.

"I suppose," he said, "our victim has taken our conduct in high dudgeon, and doesn't mean to come this morning. We shall be in a pretty mess at night if he does not!"

"What do you mean?" said Davidge, with a look of surprise.

"This Billy Coombes, he is not come to the theatre to-day, and is not to be found at his lodgings, for we have sent a man there."

"By G—," said Davidge, "I never let him out of the box!"

On reflection, they had certainly finished the pantomime without him, although it did not strike them at the time, because, as he was no great actor, the business of the last two scenes had been arranged entirely between Davidge and Grimaldi. They lost no time in inquiring after the chest, and it was at length discovered in a cellar below the stage. On raising the lid, the Pantaloon was discovered, and a truly pitiable object he looked, although they were both not a little relieved to find he was alive, for, not knowing that the chest was perforated in various places, they had entertained some serious fears that when he did turn up, he might be found suffocated. Every necessary assistance was afforded him, and he never suffered in the slightest degree from his temporary confinement. He said that he had shouted as loud as he could, and had knocked and kicked against the sides of his prison, but that nobody had taken the least notice of him, which he attributed to the incessant noise and bustle behind the scenes. With the view of keeping the stage as clear as possible, everything used in a pantomime is put away at once; the chest was lowered by a trap into the cellar, notwithstanding the shouts of the Pantaloon, who, knowing that he would be released next day, went to sleep very quietly.

This was the version of the story given by the ingenious Mr. Coombes, and in this version Grimaldi was an implicit believer. We are rather disposed to think that Mr. Coombes might have thrown an additional light upon the matter by explaining that he had got into the chest that morning to turn the tables upon his assailants, the more so, as he received various little presents in the way of compensation for his imprisonment, with which he expressed himself perfectly satisfied.

This "Billy Coombes," or whatever the man's name may have been, once said a very ludicrous thing upon the stage which convulsed the audience with laughter. The play was Romeo and Juliet, and he was cast to perform Sampson. The wardrobe of the theatre being very scanty, he was habited in a most absurd and ridiculous dress, every article of which had evidently formed a portion of a different suit, and which was moreover full three sizes too large for him, especially the coat, the cuffs of which, instead of ornamenting his wrists, dangled over his fingers' ends. In this disguise, "Billy," who waxed extremely wroth at the figure he cut, presented himself to the audience, and was of course received with a loud laugh.

Now, in the first scene of the play, Sampson, according to the stage-direction, has to bite his thumb at Abram, a servitor of the rival house, upon which the following dialogue ensues:—

"*Abram.* Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

"*Samp.* (*aside.*) Is the law on our side if I say ay?

"*Gregory.* No.

"*Samp.* No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir."

Billy Coombes very coolly omitted biting his thumb at all; but the actor who played Abram, desirous to carry on the business of the scene, thought it best to take it for granted that the stage-direction had been complied with, and turning indignantly round, said,

"Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"

"No, sir," replied Billy Coombes in a clear and loud voice. "I would, sir, with pleasure, only my master puts me into such a queer coat, sir," holding up one of the long sleeves, "that I can't get at my fist for the life of me."

The audience roared, the actors laughed, and for some minutes the stage-business was at a complete stand-still; Billy meanwhile making many apparently sincere and laboured attempts to uncover his hand, in which at last he thought proper to succeed, and giving the right cue, the play went on.

When Grimaldi returned to town, the rehearsals of "Harlequin and the Sylph of the Oak, or the Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green," commenced at Covent Garden. It was produced with great success at the usual time, and was followed, in April, 1816, by Pocock's melodrama of "Robinson Crusoe, or the Bold Buccaneer," in which Grimaldi played Friday, and Farley acted Crusoe. This was the most successful adaptation of De Foe's great story; it was played for a great many nights, and is still occasionally performed.

CHAPTER XIX.

1816 to 1817.

He quits Sadlers Wells in consequence of a disagreement with the Proprietors.—Lord Byron.—Retirement of John Kemble.—Immense Success of Grimaldi in the Provinces, and his great Gains.—A scene in a Barber's Shop.

At Sadlers Wells the principal novelty of the season of 1816 was a very successful melodrama called "Philip and his Dog." During a period of thirty-eight years, that is to say, from 1782 to 1820 inclusive, Grimaldi was never absent from Sadlers Wells except for one season. The cause of his non-engagement in 1817 was this:—His former articles expiring a few days before the close of the previous season, he received a note from Mr.

Charles Dibdin requesting to know upon what terms he would be disposed to renew them. He replied, that they had only to make the pounds guineas, and he would be content. There was no objection to this proposition, but he was informed that the proprietors had arrived at the resolution of no longer allowing him two benefits in each year, and of permitting him in future to take only one. He considered this a very arbitrary and unjust proceeding. As he had never under any circumstances cleared less than £150 from a benefit, this reduction necessarily involved the diminution of his yearly income by a large sum; and as he paid £60 for the house on every such occasion, which was probably more than it would otherwise have had in it, he did not think that the proprietors could urge any just reason for proposing the alteration. After considering these points, he wrote to Mr. Charles Dibdin, at that time a proprietor himself, that he could on no consideration give up either of his accustomed benefits. To this note he received no reply, but he confidently expected that they would not attempt a season without him, he being at that time unquestionably the lion of the theatre, and certainly drawing money to the house. He was, however, deceived, for he heard no more from Mr. Charles Dibdin, and eventually learned that Paulo was engaged in his place.

In the November of this year he made a little excursion of four days to Brighton, the theatre of which town belonged to Mr. John Brunton, who was likewise an actor, and a very good one too, at Covent Garden. This gentleman was the father of one of our best modern actresses —Mrs. Yates, whose talents are so well and so deservedly appreciated. He was always a kind friend to Grimaldi, and had no cause to accuse him of ingratitude.

At Brighton they played Valentine and Orson, Robinson Crusoe, &c., in which Brunton, who was well acquainted with pantomime and melodrama, acted Farley's parts, while Grimaldi, of course, sustained his original characters. They were very successful indeed, Grimaldi receiving 100*l.* for his remuneration, with which, as will be readily supposed, he was perfectly well satisfied.

At this time he repeatedly met with Lord Byron, not only at Covent Garden, but at various private parties to which he was invited; and eventually they became very good friends. Lord Byron was, as all the world knows, an eccentric man, and he loses nothing of the character in Grimaldi's hands.

"Sometimes," he says, "his lordship appeared lost in deep melancholy, and when that was the case, really looked the picture of despair, for his face was highly capable of expressing profound grief; at other times he was very lively, chatting with great spirit and vivacity; and then occasionally he would be a complete fop, exhibiting his white hands and teeth with an almost ludicrous degree of affectation. But whether "grave or gay, lively or severe," his bitter, biting sarcasm never was omitted or forgotten.

It never fell to Grimaldi's lot to hear any person say such severe things as Byron accustomed himself to utter, and they tended not a little to increase the awe with which, upon their first interview, he had been predisposed to regard him. As to Grimaldi himself, Byron invariably acted towards him with much condescension and good humour, frequently conversing with him for hours together; and when the business of the evening called him away, he would wait at the "wings" for him, and as soon as he came off the stage, recommence the conversation where it had been broken off. Grimaldi rarely contradicted him, fearing to draw down upon himself the sarcasms which he constantly heard fulminated against others; and when they spoke on subjects with Byron's opinions upon which he was unacquainted, he cautiously endeavoured to ascertain them before he ventured to give his own, fearing, as he felt so very warmly upon most questions, that he might chance to dissent from him upon one in which he took great interest.

Before Lord Byron left England upon the expedition whence he was destined to return no more, he presented Grimaldi, as a token, he said, of his regard, with a valuable silver snuff-box, around which was the inscription, "The gift of Lord Byron to Joseph Grimaldi." It was of course preserved with the most scrupulous care, and valued more highly than any article in his possession. It is but an act of justice to both parties to say, that Lord Byron always treated him with the greatest liberality. In 1808, when he saw him act for the first time, he sent a message to his residence, requesting that he would always forward to him one box-ticket whenever he took a benefit. This he regularly did, and in return invariably received on the following day a five-pound note.

"Harlequin Gulliver, or the Flying Island," which was the pantomime of the year at Covent Garden, was so successful as to be played sixty-three nights before Easter. On the 30th of March, a piece under the title of "The Marquis de Carabbas, or Puss in Boots," was produced, and utterly failed. It was a very poor affair, was only played one night, and appears to have fully deserved its fate.

On the same night Sadlers Wells commenced its season, upon which occasion the unexpected absence of Grimaldi occasioned quite a commotion among the audience. He had said nothing about it himself, nor was the circumstance known to the public until the bills were put forth, when the announcement of Paulo's engagement and Grimaldi's secession occasioned much surprise and some manifestation of feeling. Grimaldi had been spending a few days at Egham, and upon his return to town, towards the latter end of March, was not a little amazed to see the walls in the neighbourhood of his house in Spa Fields completely covered with placards emanating from the rival parties, some bearing the words "Joey for ever!" others displaying "No Paulo!" and others again "No Grimaldi!" It was supposed by some that Grimaldi himself had a hand in the distribution of these bills; but he solemnly denies it, declaring that he never saw anything of them until they were paraded upon the walls on his return to town.

The theatre opened with "Philip and his Dog," and a new harlequinade called "April Fools, or Months and Mummery." Being informed that it was Dibdin's intention, if any disturbance occurred in consequence of his absence, to address the house and state that it had resulted from Grimaldi's express wish, he went to the boxes on the opening night, determined, if any such statement were made, to address the audience from his place, and explain the circumstances under which he had left the theatre. He was spared this very disagreeable task, however, no other expression of public feeling taking place except that which is of all others most sensibly and acutely felt by a manager;—the people stayed away. Instead of every seat being taken, and standing-places eagerly secured, as had formerly been the case, the theatre was not a quarter filled. There were only forty persons, and these principally friends of the proprietors, in the boxes; not more than a hundred in the pit, and the gallery was not half full. Grimaldi stayed only the first act of the first piece, and then, seeing no probability of being called for, walked away to Covent Garden, to dress for "Puss in Boots," the untimely fate of which has been already recorded.

The next morning, the newspapers, one and all, made known Grimaldi's absence from Sadlers Wells, and regretted it as a circumstance which could not fail to prove very injurious to the interests of the theatre. They did this without decrying the merits of Paulo, who was really a very good Clown, but who laboured under the double disadvantage of not being known at Sadlers Wells, and of following in the wake of one who had been a great favourite there for so many years.

Grimaldi's non-engagement at Sadlers Wells was no sooner made known than the provincial managers vied with each other in their endeavours to secure him. Mr. W. Murray, the manager of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Theatres, offered him an engagement at each for six nights when Covent Garden closed, which he immediately accepted. The terms were these:—Grimaldi was to have the best night's receipts out of each six, Murray the second best, and the other four to be equally divided between them, deducting forty pounds for expenses. He had no sooner closed with this proprietor than he was waited upon by Mr. Knight of the Manchester and Liverpool Theatres, who offered him an engagement for three weeks, into which he also entered. There then followed such a long list of offers, that if he had had twelve months at his disposal instead of six weeks, they would have occupied the whole time. Many of these offers were of the most handsome and liberal nature, and it was with great regret that he was compelled to decline them.

As there was nothing for Grimaldi to do at Covent Garden in consequence of the early decease of "Puss in Boots," he accepted an overture from Mr. Brunton, who was the lessee of the Birmingham Theatre, for himself and his son, to act there for seven nights. It was the

son's first provincial excursion, and the profits were somewhere about two hundred pounds. He took Worcester in his way on his return, and agreed, at the pressing request of Mr. Crisp, the manager, to stop and play there one night. He offered forty pounds down, or a fair division of the receipts. Grimaldi chose the former terms, acted Scaramouch to a very crowded house, sang several songs, and finished with a pantomime in which he and his son were Clowns. He supped with the manager, who at the conclusion of the meal presented him with a fifty-pound note, saying, if he would accept that sum in lieu of the one agreed upon, it was heartily at his service, and he (the manager) would still be a great gainer by the transaction. This liberal treatment gave him a very favourable impression of the Worcester manager, whom he assured that should he ever be in that part of the country again, he would not fail to communicate with him. The next day, father and son both returned to town, when the former had the satisfaction of hearing that he had not been wanted at Covent Garden. He found several letters from provincial managers offering great terms; but as he was obliged to be in London at the opening of Covent Garden, and the theatres to which they related did not lie anywhere in his route from Edinburgh to Liverpool, he had no option but to decline these proposals.

On the 23rd of June in this year John Kemble took his final leave of the stage, the entertainments being "Coriolanus" and "The Portrait of Cervantes." At the conclusion of the play, in which he had sustained the chief part with all his wonted dignity and grace, Kemble spoke a brief address, in which he took his farewell of the public, whom he had so long delighted. A white satin scarf with a wreath was thrown from the boxes, which falling short, alighted in the orchestra; upon which M. Talma, the French tragedian, who was sitting there, instantly rose from his seat and placed it on the stage, amidst thunders of applause.

He appeared but seldom during the remainder of the season at Covent Garden, which closed on the 2nd of July. On the following day he left London for Scotland. When he reached Edinburgh, he was a little surprised to hear from Mr. Murray, that in consequence of Emery being engaged to play at Glasgow, he should be obliged to limit his (Grimaldi's) nights there to three instead of six, as agreed upon. This very much surprised him; but as there was no help for it, he acquiesced with a good grace, and left Edinburgh immediately for Glasgow, where he was to act on the following night. It chanced that it was Sunday, a day on which the common stage-coaches do not run in Scotland, and he therefore took a post-chaise, which was eleven hours and a half performing the distance, or about double the time in which he could have walked it with ease.

"Whittington," "Don Juan," "Valentine and Orson," and "The Rivals," were the pieces acted at Glasgow. In the first three his son performed with him; in the latter he played Acres, and was very well received. He played this part throughout his provincial trips, and always to the perfect satisfaction and amusement of the audience. He never played Richard the Third in the provinces, as has been represented, but limited his performance of characters out of pantomime or melodrama, to Acres, Moll Flaggon, and one other part.

When Grimaldi had finished at Glasgow, he joined the company at Edinburgh, where he played Acres twice. The song of Tippitywitchit took amazingly with the gude folks of Auld Reekie, and both he and his son were received with great kindness and favour.

On the day after the completion of the engagement, Mr. Murray called at Grimaldi's lodgings, and wrote him a cheque for 417*l.* as his share, concluding by inviting him to pay him a similar visit during the following summer. The next morning he went to the bank to get his cheque cashed, when he was told that he could only receive Edinburgh notes, which were not payable out of Scotland, unless he consented to pay five per cent. for the accommodation. He was very loth to accept the one or pay the other; which the banker perceiving, told him that he happened to have a Bank-stock English note, payable forty days after sight, for 400*l.*, which he could let him have. Not being short of cash, he accepted this, and received the 17*l.* balance in Scotch notes.

On the 22nd Grimaldi left Edinburgh for Berwick, where he had promised to play for two nights, and where he came out the following evening. He was greatly amazed when he saw the theatre at this town: it was situate up a stable-yard, in a loft, to reach which it was necessary to climb two flights of stairs, the whole entrance being mean and dirty, and, to ladies especially, particularly disagreeable. But his surprise was far from being confined to the exterior of the theatre: on the contrary, when he surveyed its interior, and found it neat and complete, perfect in its appointments, and even stylish in its decorations, his amazement was increased. It was still further augmented by the appearance and manner of the audience to which he played in the evening, for he had never by any chance acted (taking the size of the building into consideration) to a more fashionable and brilliant box-company.

The second night was as good as the first, and he received for his exertions 92*l.* 7*s.* On this evening he supped with the manager, and during their meal the servant brought in a letter directed to Grimaldi, which had just been left at the door by a footman in livery, who, after delivering it, had immediately walked away. He broke the seal, and read as follows:

"Sir,—Accept the enclosed as a reward of your merit and the entertainment we have received from you this evening.

"A Friend."

"Thursday, July, 24th, 1817."

The "enclosed" alluded to by the writer was a bank-note for 50*l.*!

Next day Grimaldi bade adieu to Berwick, and went direct to Liverpool, where he made his first appearance on the 30th; and here, according to previous arrangement, he remained three weeks. His salary was to be 12*l.* per week, with half a clear benefit, or the whole house for 40*l.*, which he chose.

As the night fixed upon for his benefit (which was the last of his engagement) drew nigh, he began anxiously to deliberate whether he should speculate in the "whole house" or not. He had no friends or acquaintances in Liverpool to assist him, but, on the other hand, he had made a tremendous hit; so, not being able to decide himself, he called in the aid of his friends Emery, Blanchard, and Jack Johnstone, who chanced to be there at the time, and requested their advice how he should proceed. With one accord they advised him to venture upon taking the house, which he, adopting their advice, forthwith did, paying down his 40*l.*, however, with many doubts as to the result. He lost no time in making out his bill and getting it printed. The play was "The Rivals," in which he acted Acres, and the afterpiece the pantomime of "Harlequin's Olio," in which his son was to appear as Flipflap, a kind of attendant upon Harlequin, and he as the Clown.

Several days elapsed, but nothing betokening a good benefit presented itself, and Grimaldi began to suspect it would turn out a complete failure. On the morning of the very day he had sold only fourteen tickets, and walked to the theatre with rather downcast spirits. At the box-door he met Mr. Banks, one of the managers, who addressed him with,

"Well, Joe, a precious benefit you will have!"

"So I expect," he answered with a sigh.

Have you looked at the box-book?" inquired the manager, with a slight degree of surprise in his manner.

"No," said Grimaldi; "I really am afraid to do so."

"Afraid!" echoed the manager; "upon my word, Mr. Grimaldi, I don't know what you would have, or what you are afraid of. Every seat in the boxes is taken; and if there had been more, they would have been let."

Hastening to the box-office, Grimaldi found that this good news was perfectly correct. His benefit, which took place on the 20th August, produced the greatest receipts ever known in that theatre: the sum taken was 328*l.* 14*s.*, being 1*l.* more than was received at Miss O'Neil's benefit (who was a wonderful favourite in the town), and beating John Emery's by 5*l.* He cleared upwards of 280*l.* by following the advice of his friends; upon the strength of which, they all dined together next day and made very merry.

Many offers from other theatres came pouring in, but Grimaldi only accepted two; one to act at Preston, and the other to play four nights at Hereford for Mr. Crisp, for whom he naturally entertained very friendly feelings, remembering the courteous and handsome manner in which he had treated him at Worcester.

Two days after his great benefit Grimaldi travelled over to Preston, to fulfil his engagement with Mr. Howard, the manager, but was very much dispirited by the number of Quakers whom he saw walking about the streets, and whose presence in such numbers caused him to entertain great doubts of the success of this trip. The

manager, however, was more sanguine, and, as it afterwards appeared, with good reason. He played Acres and Scaramouch to full houses, the receipts on the first night being £84, and on the second £87 16s. His share of the joint receipts was £86, with which sum, as it far exceeded his expectations, he was well contented.

On the second day after Grimaldi arrived in Preston, a little circumstance occurred which amused him so much, that he intended to have introduced it in one of his pantomime scenes, although he never did so. He was walking along the street by the market-place, when, observing a barber's pole projecting over the pavement, and recollecting that he wanted shaving, he opened the shop-door from above which hung the pole, and looking into the shop, saw a pretty little girl, about sixteen years of age, who was sitting at needlework. She rose to receive him, and he inquired if the master was within.

"No, sir," said the girl; "but I expect him directly."

"Very good," replied Grimaldi: "I want to look about me a little; I'll call again."

After strolling through the market-place a little while, he called again, but the barber had not come home.

Grimaldi was walking down the street after this second unsuccessful call, when he encountered Mr. Howard the manager, with whom he fell into conversation, and they walked up and down the street talking together. As he was going to the theatre and wished Grimaldi to accompany him, they turned in that direction, and passing the barber's shop, again looked in. The girl was still sitting at work; but she laid it aside when the visitors entered, and said she really was very sorry, but her father had not come in yet.

"That's very provoking," said Grimaldi, "considering that I have called here three times already."

The girl agreed that it was, and stepping to the door, looked anxiously up the street and down the street, but there was no barber in sight.

"Do you want to see him on any particular business?" inquired Howard.

"Bless my heart! no, not I," said Grimaldi: "I only want to be shaved."

"Shaved, sir!" cried the girl. "Oh, dear me! what a pity it is you did not say so before! for I do most of the shaving for father when he's at home, and all when he's out."

"To be sure she does," said Howard. "I have been shaved by her fifty times."

"You have!" said Grimaldi. "Oh, I'm sure I have no objection. I am quite ready, my dear."

Grimaldi sat himself down in a chair, and the girl commenced the task in a very business-like manner, Grimaldi feeling an irresistible tendency to laugh at the oddity of the operation, but smothering it by dint of great efforts while the girl was shaving his chin. At length, when she got to his upper lip, and took his nose between her fingers with a piece of brown paper, he could stand it no longer, but burst into a tremendous roar of laughter, and made a face at Howard which the girl no sooner saw than she dropped the razor and laughed immoderately also; whereat Howard began to laugh too, which only set Grimaldi laughing more; when just at this moment in came the barber, who seeing three people in convulsions of mirth, one of them with a soapy face and a gigantic mouth making the most extravagant faces over a white towel, threw himself into a chair without ceremony, and dashing his hat on the ground, laughed louder than any of them, declaring in broken words as he could find breath to utter them, that "that gentleman as was being shaved was out of sight the funniest gentleman he had ever seen," and entreating him "to stop them faces, or he knew he should die." When they were all perfectly exhausted, the barber finished what his daughter had begun; and rewarding the girl with a shilling, Grimaldi and the manager took their leaves.

Having settled at the theatre, received his money, and made several purchases in the town, for he always spent a percentage in every place where he had been successful, Grimaldi returned to Liverpool on the 24th of August.

CHAPTER XX.

1817.

More provincial success.—Bologna and his economy.—Comparative dearness of Welsh Rare-bits and Partridges.—Remarkably odd modes of saving money.

HAVING no engagement at Liverpool,—indeed, having no time to accept one,—Grimaldi remained there only two days, at the expiration of which time he went to Hereford, and having waited on Mr. Crisp, the manager, went to look at the theatre, which, to his great astonishment and concern, he found to be no more than a common square room, with a stage four yards wide and about as many high, the head of the statue in Don Juan being obscured by the flies, and thus rendered wholly invisible to the audience. What made this circumstance the more annoying, was, that on the statue being seen to nod its head depended the effect of one of the very best scenes in Scaramouch.

As Grimaldi did not hesitate to express his great mortification and annoyance, and his decided indisposition to act in such a place for four nights, which was the term originally proposed, a fresh arrangement was entered into, by which he engaged to play two nights at Hereford, and two at Worcester, where he knew there was a better theatre. He accordingly played two nights at Hereford, and two at Worcester. At the former town the receipts were on the first night £42, and on the second £45, his share of the total being £43 10s. At Worcester, the receipts of the first night were £87, and of the second £93 16s.: here he also received a moiety of the two nights' receipts.

Having now concluded his provincial engagements, Grimaldi repaired to Cheltenham for rest and relaxation, and remained there until the second week in September, when he returned to London. While at Cheltenham, he stumbled upon his old friend Richer, the rope-dancer, already mentioned as having been engaged at Sadlers Wells at an early period of Grimaldi's career. He had retired from the profession, and was married to the widow of a clergyman who had died extremely rich. They were living in great style, and to all appearance very happy.

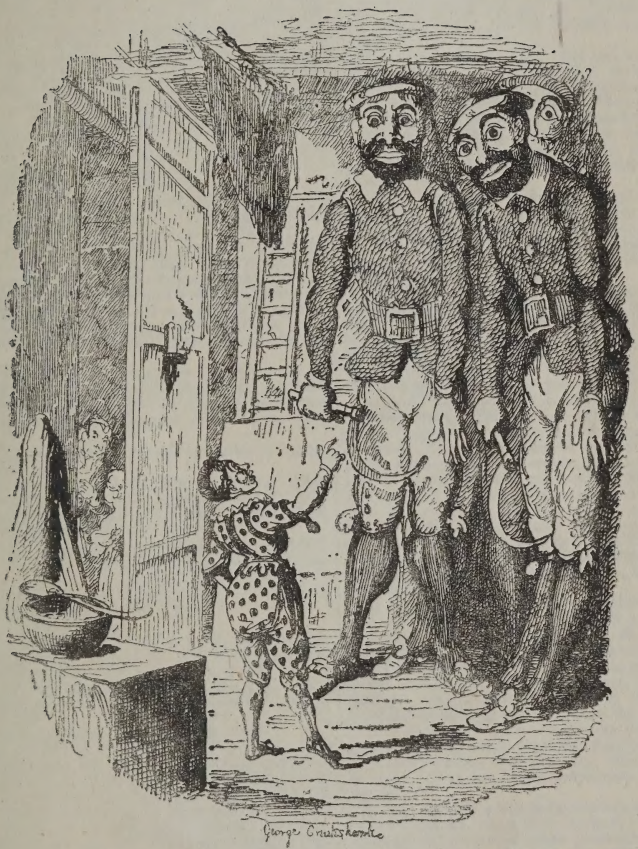
The following account of Grimaldi's gains during this short excursion will afford some idea of the immense sums he was in the habit of receiving about this time. The amount was so much more than he had supposed, that on going over the calculation he could scarcely believe he was correct. It was as follows:—

Brighton, four nights	£100	0	0
Birmingham, six	210	0	0
Worcester, one	50	0	0
Glasgow and Edinburgh, nine	417	0	0
Berwick, two	102	7	0
Liverpool, sixteen	324	14	0
Preston, two	86	0	0
Hereford, two	43	10	0
Worcester, (2nd visit) two	90	8	0
	£1423	19	0

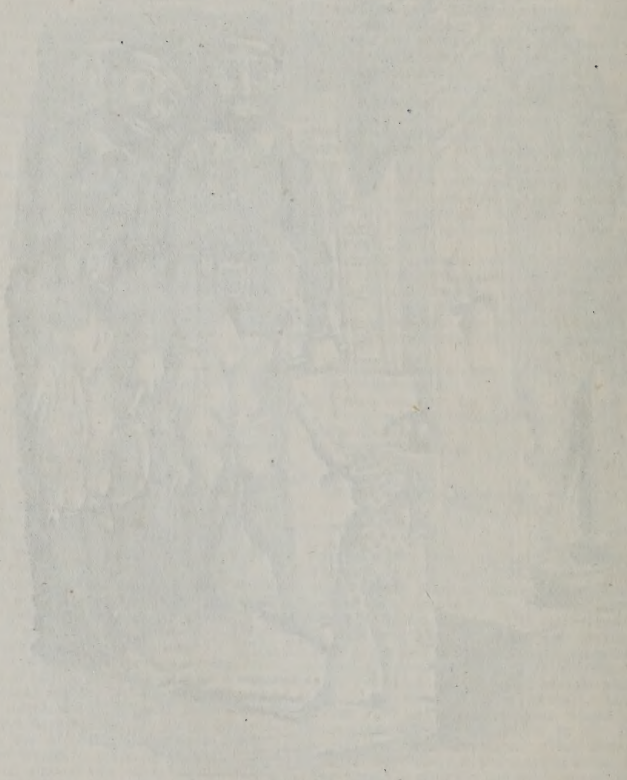
The accounts which he received at Sadlers Wells on his return were unusually bad. They were fully corroborated by Mr. Hughes, who informed him it had been the very worst season the theatre had ever known.

Having nothing to do at Covent Garden, and entertaining a very pleasant and lively recollection of the profits of his last trip, Grimaldi determined on making another excursion, and accepted an offer from Elliston to play four nights at Birmingham, by which he cleared £150. From Birmingham he went to Leicester, where Elliston also had a theatre, and where he played for two nights, being accompanied by Mr. Brunton, who was Elliston's stage-manager. They were very successful, Grimaldi's share of the receipts being £70.

The morning after his last performance here, Grimaldi took a post-chaise and started for Chester, where he had undertaken to act for one week. As the chaise drove up to the White Lion, the London coach drove up too, and seated on the outside he saw, to his great surprise, his old friend Bologna, who, it appeared, had been engaged expressly to perform with him in "Mother Goose." The unexpected meeting afforded great pleasure to both, and having ordered a private sitting-room and a good dinner, they sat down together and fell into conversation; in the course of which, Bologna, by various hints and other slight remarks, gave his friend to understand that his old characteristic of never being able without a strong effort to make up his mind to spend a penny was by no means impaired by time. The room was handsomely fitted up; and the dinner, which was speedily placed before them, consisted of a great variety of expensive delicacies, the sight of which awakened in Bologna's mind a great many misgivings concerning the bill, which were not at all lessened by the landlady's informing them, with a low courtesy, as she placed the



GRIMALDI'S KINDNESS TO THE GIANTS. (See p. 87.)



first dish upon the table, that she knew who they were, and that she would answer for their being provided with every luxury and comfort the house would afford. They were no sooner left alone, than Bologna, with a very dissatisfied air, informed his friend that he saw it would never do to stay in that house.

"Why not?" inquired Grimaldi.

"Because of the expense," he answered. "Bless me! look at the accommodations: what do you suppose they'll charge for all this? It won't suit me, Joe; I shall be off."

"You can do as you please," rejoined his friend; "but if you'll take my advice, you'll remain where you are: for I have found from experience, that if there is a choice between a first-rate and a second-rate house, one should always go to the former. There you have the best articles at a fair price; while at the other you have bad things, worse served up and enormously dear."

Bologna was ultimately prevailed upon not to leave the house, contenting himself with various economical resolutions, which he commenced putting in practice when the waiter appeared to know if they would order supper.

"Supper!" exclaimed Bologna; "certainly not; not on any account. Suppers are extremely unhealthy; I never take them by any chance."

"You may get some supper for *me*," said Grimaldi, "and have it ready at half-past eleven."

"What will you like to order, sir?"

"I'll leave it to the landlady. Anything nice will do."

"Good Heaven!" said Bologna, as the waiter went out of the room, "what a bill you'll have to pay here!"

They strolled about the town; arranged with the manager to commence next night with "Mother Goose," and having beguiled the time till supper, repaired to the inn, where a fine brace of partridges done to a turn were placed before Grimaldi, which his companion eyed with very hungry looks, congratulating himself aloud, however, upon having saved himself that expense at all events.

There was a silence for some minutes, broken only by the clatter of knives and forks; and then Bologna, who had been walking up and down the room in a restless manner, stopped short and inquired if the birds were nice.

"Very!" replied Grimaldi, helping himself again. "They are delicious."

Bologna walked up and down the room faster after this, and then rang the bell with great vehemence. The waiter appeared, and Bologna, after long consideration, hesitatingly ordered a Welsh rare-bit.

"Certainly sir," said the man, and by the time Grimaldi had finished his supper, the Welsh rare-bit appeared.

"Stop a minute, waiter," said Bologna. "Grimaldi, do you mean to take supper every night?"

"Certainly. Every night."

"Well then, waiter, remember to bring me a Welsh rare-bit every evening when Mr. Grimaldi takes his supper. I don't want it; but it has so rude an appearance to sit looking on while another man is eating, that I must do it as a matter of form and comfort. You'll not forget?"

"I'll be sure to remember, sir," was the reply.

The moment he was gone, Grimaldi burst into a great roar of laughter, which his friend took in high dudgeon, muttering various observations regarding extravagance, which were responded to by divers remarks relative to shabbiness. Neither of them gave way, and the supper arrangement was regularly acted upon; Grimaldi always having some warm dish of game or poultry, and Bologna solacing himself with a Welsh rare-bit, and the reflection of having saved money, while his companion spent it. They stayed at Chester nine days in all, and when the bills were brought at last, found, as Grimaldi had anticipated, that the charges were moderate, and well merited by the manner in which they had been accommodated.

"Well, Bologna," said Grimaldi with a triumphant air, "are you satisfied?"

"Pretty well," he replied. "I must acknowledge that the bills are not so heavy as I feared they would have been; but there is one terrible mistake in mine. Look here! they have charged me for supper every night just as they have charged you. That must be wrong, you know: I have had nothing but Welsh rare-bits."

"Certainly," said Grimaldi, looking over the bill. "You had better ring for the waiter: I have no doubt he can explain the matter."

The bell was rung, and the waiter came.

"Oh! here's a mistake, waiter," said Bologna, handing him the bill. "You have charged me for supper every night here, and you'll remember I only had a Welsh rare-bit. Just get it altered, will you?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the waiter, glancing from the bill to the customer; it's quite right, sir."

"Quite right?"

"Quite, sir: it's the rule of the house, sir,—the rule of every house on the road,—to charge in that way. Half-a-crown for supper, sir; cold beef, fowl, game, or bread and cheese: always half-a-crown, sir. There were a great many other dishes that you might have had; but you recollect giving a particular order for a Welsh-rare-bit, sir?"

The saving man said not another word, but paid the nine half-crowns for the nine Welsh rare-bits, to his own great wrath and his friend's unspeakable amusement.

The next morning they returned to London, and on the road Grimaldi had another instance of his companion's parsimony, which determined him never to travel in his company again. When the coach came to the door, he was perfectly amazed to find that the economical Harlequin was going to travel outside, but not surprised to hear him whisper, when he expressed his astonishment, that he should save a pound by it or more.

"Yes," answered Grimaldi, "and catch a cold by sitting outside all night after your exertions at the theatre, which will cost you 20*l.* at least."

"You know nothing about it," replied Bologna with a wink; "I shall be safe inside as well as you."

"What! and pay outside fare?"

"Just so," replied he. "I'll tell you how it is. I've ascertained that there's one place vacant inside, and that the coach belongs to our landlady. Now, I mean to remind her what a deal of money we have spent in the house; to tell her that I shall be soon coming here again; and to put it to her whether she won't let me ride at least a part of the way inside."

Grimaldi was not a little offended and vexed by this communication, feeling, that as they had been stopping at the house as companions and friends, he was rather involved in the shabbiness of his fellow-traveller. His angry remonstrances, however, produced not the slightest effect. Bologna acted precisely as he had threatened, and received permission from the good lady of the house, who was evidently much surprised at the application, to occupy the vacant inside place; it being stipulated and understood on both sides, that if anywhere on the road a passenger were found requiring an inside place, Bologna should either give up his, or pay the regular fare on to London.

As Grimaldi could not prevent this arrangement, he was compelled to listen to it with a good grace. The manager, who came to see them off, brought 100*l.* for Grimaldi, all in three-shilling pieces, packed up in a large brown paper parcel; and this part of the luggage being stowed in the coach-pocket, away they went, Bologna congratulating himself on his diplomacy, and Grimaldi consoling himself with the reflection that he should know how to avoid him in future, and that he was now at least safe from any further exhibition of his parsimony during the journey. The former resolution he kept, but in the latter conclusion he was desperately wrong.

It was evening when they started, and at four o'clock in the morning, when they stopped to change horses, a customer for an inside place presented himself; whereupon the driver, opening the coach-door, civilly reminded Bologna of the conditions upon which he held his seat.

Bologna was fast asleep the first time the man spoke, and having been roused, had the matter explained to him once more; upon which he sat bolt upright in the coach, and repeated all that the man had said, inquired with great distinctness whether he understood it to be put to him, that he must either pay the inside fare or get out.

"That's it, sir," said the coachman.

"Very well," said Bologna, without the slightest alteration of tone or manner; "then I shall do neither the one nor the other."

The coachman, falling back a pace or two from the door, and recovering from a brief trance of astonishment, addressed the passengers, the would-be passenger, the hostlers and stable-boys who were standing around, upon the mean and shabby conduct of the individual inside.

Upon this, the passengers remonstrated, the would-be passenger stormed, the coachman and guard bellowed, the hostlers hooted, the stable-boys grinned, Grimaldi worked himself into a state of intense vexation, and the cause of all the tumult sat quite immovable.

"Now, I'll tell you what it is," said the coachman, when his eloquence was quite exhausted,—"one word's as good as a thousand. Will you get out?"

"No, I will not," answered the sleepy Harlequin; "shut the door."

"Very well," said the man; "then off goes my benjamin, and out you come like a sack of sawdust."

As the man was of that portly form and stout build which is the badge of all his tribe, and as, stimulated by the approving murmurs of the lookers-on, he began suiting the action to the word without delay, Bologna thought it best to come to terms, so turned out into the cold air, and took his seat on the coach-top, amidst several expressions of very undisguised contempt from his fellow-passengers.

They performed the rest of the journey in this way, and Grimaldi alighting at the Angel at Islington, left Bologna to go on to the coach-house in Holborn, previously giving both the guard and coachman something beyond their usual fee, as an intelligible hint that he was not of the same caste as his companion.

Two or three days afterwards, meeting Bologna in the street, he inquired how he had got on at the coach-office.

"Oh, very well," said Bologna; "they abused me finely."

"Just what I expected."

"Yes, and very glad I was of it too."

"What do you mean?"

"Saved my money, Joe; that's what I mean. If they had been civil, of course I must have given something, not only to the coachman, but to the guard besides; but as they were not civil, of course I did not give either of them a penny, and so saved something handsome by it."

Bologna had many good qualities, and he and Grimaldi always remained on good terms; but as he was not upon the whole the most entertaining travelling companion that could be found, they never afterwards encountered each other in that capacity.

CHAPTER XXI.

1817 to 1818.

Production of "Baron Munchausen."—Anecdote of Ellar the Harlequin, showing how he jumped through the Moon and put his hand out.—Grimaldi becomes a Proprietor of Sadlers Wells.—Anecdotes of the late Duke of York, Sir Godfrey Webster, a Gold Snuff-Box, his late Majesty, Newcastle Salmon, and a Coal Mine.

GRIMALDI need not have hastened back to town with so much expedition, for he was not in request at Covent Garden, as it turned out, until November, and then only for a night or two in "La Perouse." Still, as it was uncertain whether he might not be wanted at a few days' notice, he was fearful of accepting any provincial engagement of more than a week's duration.

Sadlers Wells was closed when he reached London, after a season which had entailed a very severe loss on the proprietors; the balance against whom was so heavy, as to cause it to be rumoured that one more such season would throw a few of the shares into new hands, which in reality shortly afterwards occurred. In a pecuniary point of view it was an extremely fortunate thing for Grimaldi that he had remained absent from Sadlers Wells during the summer of 1817, his gains in the provinces being considerably more than they would have been if he had remained in town; while, on the other hand, the degree of exertion he had to encounter in the provinces was greatly inferior to that which he must have sustained at Sadlers Wells. In addition to the 1423*l.* 19*s.* of which an account is given in the last chapter, he received for four nights at Birmingham 150*l.*, for two nights at Leicester 70*l.*, and for six at Chester 100*l.*, making a clear gain of 1743*l.* 19*s.* for fifty-six nights' performance; whereas if he had remained at Sadlers Wells, he would have merely received his thirty weeks' salary at 12*l.* each, and two benefits at 150*l.* each, making a total of 660*l.* for one hundred and eighty nights' performance. He was therefore a gainer not only in the saving of bodily exertion, but in the sum of 1073*l.* 19*s.*, by his fortunate and unlooked-for expulsion from Sadlers Wells.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was entitled "Baron Munchausen," and proved as successful as its predecessors had done for some years. During its run, a circumstance occurred worthy of mention, as an instance of the brutality of a man belonging to the theatre.

One night, a fellow engaged as a carpenter, and whose business it likewise was to assist in holding a carpet in which the pantomime characters are caught when they jump through the scenes, went to Ellar, who was the Harlequin, and holding up the carpet, said that it was very dry, thereby intimating in the cant phrase that he required something to drink. Ellar, from some cause or other, either because he had already fee'd the men liberally, or was engaged at the moment in conversation, returned some slight answer, unaccompanied by the required gratuity, and the fellow went away grumbling. On the following evening, Ellar was informed that the man had been heard to talk about being revenged upon him: he only laughed at the threat, however, and all went on as usual until the third night afterwards, when, as he and Grimaldi were on the stage together, in the scene where he used to jump through the "moon," and after the former had given the cue for him to take the leap, he was surprised to observe that he hesitated, and still more so when, drawing close to him, he said in a whisper, "I am afraid they don't mean to catch me. I have knocked three times against the scene, and asked if they were ready; but nobody has said a word in reply."

"It's impossible," whispered Grimaldi: "I don't believe there is a man in the theatre who would dream of such a thing. Jump man, jump!"

Ellar still paused, and Grimaldi fancying that symptoms of impatience were beginning to appear among the audience, told him so, and again urged him not to stop the business of the scene, but to jump at once.

"Well, well," cried Ellar, "here goes!—but Heaven knows how it will end!" And in a complete state of uncertainty whether any men were there to catch him, or he was left to break his neck, he went through the scene. His fears were not without good ground; for the fellows whose business it was to hold the carpet were holding it, as they well knew, in a position where he could never reach it, and down he fell. Suspecting his danger while in the very act of going through the panel, he endeavoured to save his head by sacrificing a hand. In this he fortunately succeeded, as he sustained no other injury than breaking the hand upon which he fell. The accident occasioned him great pain and inconvenience, but he insisted on going through the part, and the audience were quite ignorant of the occurrence.

The circumstance was not long in reaching the ears of Mr. Harris and Mr. Fawcett, who were made acquainted not only with Ellar's accident, but with the man's threat, and the occasion which had given rise to it. Fawcett immediately caused all the carpenters to assemble on the stage, and told them, that if Mr. Ellar would undertake to say he believed the accident had been brought about wilfully, they should every one be discharged on the spot. Ellar being sent for and informed that this was the proprietor's deliberate intention, replied without hesitation, that he could not believe it was intentional, and whispered to Grimaldi as he left the house, that the fellow had got a wife and half-a-dozen children dependent upon him.

This praiseworthy resolution, which prevented several men from being thrown out of employment, was rendered the more praiseworthy by Ellar's having no earthly doubt that the mistake was intentional, and by his knowing perfectly well that if he had fallen on his head in lieu of his hand, he would most probably have been killed on the spot.

While upon the subject of stage accidents, we may remark, that very few of these mischances befel Grimaldi, considering the risks to which a pantomime actor is exposed, and the serious injuries he is constantly encountering. The hazards were not so great in Grimaldi's case as they would have been to any other man similarly situated, inasmuch as his Clown was a very quiet personage, so far as the use or abuse of his limbs was concerned, and by no means addicted to those violent contortions of body which are painful alike to actor and spectator. His Clown was an embodied conception of his own, whose humour was in his looks, and not in his tumbles, and who excited the laughter of an audience while standing upon his heels, and not upon his head. If the present race of Clowns and the rising generation of that honourable fraternity would endeavour to imitate him in

this respect, they would be more at ease themselves, and place their audiences more at ease also.

In February 1818, Grimaldi received several intimations that if he chose to make application to the proprietors of Sadlers Wells, he might return almost upon his own terms; but he declined doing so, partly from feeling rather annoyed at the manner in which he had been treated, and partly from discovering how well provincial excursions answered in a pecuniary point of view, and how much more conducive they were to his health than remaining in town. Nevertheless, when Mrs. Hughes, the widow of his friend, waited upon him and intreated him herself to return, he scarcely knew how to refuse, and at last told her that if he returned at all to that establishment it must be as a part proprietor. He said this, thinking that it would either release him from any further requests to go back to Sadlers Wells, or enable him to share in the profits which had been for many years accruing to the proprietors. But in this idea, as in many others, he was totally mistaken. After some little preliminaries, in the shape of meetings, discussions waiving of objections, &c., the proposal was accepted, and he became the purchaser of a certain number of shares in Sadlers Wells from Mrs. Hughes herself. This being arranged, Grimaldi accepted an engagement for the ensuing season upon his old terms, merely bargaining that he should be permitted to leave town about the end of July for six weeks in each year, to fulfil provincial engagements.

The result of Grimaldi's first season's proprietorship was far from propitious. At first all went on very well; but after he had left (as previously stipulated) in July, the houses fell to nothing, and when he arrived in town again in September, he was informed that there would be a clear loss instead of any profit. This both surprised and vexed him; for Sadlers Wells had always been considered a very good property, and he had fully expected that he should, merely upon becoming a proprietor, have to receive a sum of money yearly, in addition to his regular salary.

The first proprietors' meeting which he attended, occurred a few days after the close of the season; and then all the books and papers connected with the business of the theatre being produced, it was found that a heavy loss was really attendant upon the year's campaign.

"And pray, what may be the amount?" he inquired rather dolefully,—for he now began to repent of his purchase, and to fancy that he saw all his recently-acquired wealth fading away.

Mr. Richard Hughes shook his head when he heard his question, and said, "Ah, Joe, the loss is 333*l.* 13*s.*"

"Oh, come!" cried Grimaldi, "it's not so bad as I thought,—333*l.* 13*s.* is not so much among six persons!" which was the number of proprietors at that time.

"Joe," said Mr. Hughes gravely, "is this the first meeting you have attended?"

"Yes."

"Ah, then I do not wonder you have misunderstood me. What I meant was, that the loss to each person is 333*l.* 13*s.*, the gross loss being six times that sum."

This communication was a very unexpected blow to all his hopes; but as there was nothing better to be done, he paid his share of the money at once with as good a grace as he could assume, having thus gratified his wish to become a proprietor of Sadlers Wells by the expenditure, first, of a large sum of money for his shares, and secondly, of another sum of upwards of 330*l.* at the end of the first season.

Grimaldi anticipated other heavy demands upon his provincial gains of 1817 and 1818, and bitterly regretted having connected himself with the establishment in any other way than as a salaried actor. The losses of this season verified the rumours he had heard regarding the other proprietors, three of whom, namely, Messrs. T. and C. Dibdin, and Barfoot, were unable to pay up their deficiencies,—upon which, agreeably to an article in the rules of the copartnership, they were sold by auction, on the 21st of July 1820, and purchased by Mr. R. Hughes and Mr. Dixon of Barbican.

While playing in "Baron Munchausen" at Covent Garden one evening very shortly after Ellar's accident, he observed his Royal Highness the Duke of York, accompanied by Sir Godfrey Webster and another gentleman, sitting in his Royal Highness's private box, and laughing very heartily at the piece. Upon his coming off the stage about the middle of the pantomime, he found Sir Godfrey waiting for him.

"Hard work, Grimaldi!"

"Hard and hot, Sir Godfrey!"

"Have a pinch of snuff, Grimaldi," said Sir Godfrey. "It will refresh you." With this he produced from behind him, where he had been holding it, the largest snuff-box Grimaldi had ever beheld. The sight of it amused him much. Sir Godfrey laughed and said, "Take it to that gentleman," pointing to the Pantaloon, who was on the stage, "and see if he would like a pinch."

Grimaldi willingly complied, and having shortly afterwards to enact a foppish scene, swaggered about the stage, ostentatiously displaying this huge box, which from its enormous size really looked like a caricature made expressly for the purpose, and offered a pinch to the Pantaloon with all that affectation of politeness in which he was so ludicrous. The audience laughed at its gigantic size; and the Pantaloon, looking suspiciously at him, demanded,

"Where did you get this box?"

To this, affecting modest reserve and diffidence, he made no answer, but turned away his head.

"You've stolen it!" continued Pantaloon.

This the injured Clown strongly denied upon his honour, with many bows and slides, and averred it was a gift.

"Given to you!" cried the Pantaloon: "and pray, who gave it to you?"

In answer to this, he pointed significantly to the box whither Sir Godfrey had retired, and the merriment which this occasioned was great indeed. The Duke, to whom, as he discovered afterwards, the box belonged, was convulsed with laughter; nor were the gentlemen with him less merry, while the audience, either suspecting that some joke was afloat, or being amused at the scene, joined in the hearty laughter emanating from the royal box.

"Where are you going to take the box?" asked Pantaloon as he turned to go off.

"Where it has often been before," cried Grimaldi, pointing upwards: "to my uncle's!" And so saying, he ran off the stage amid a fresh burst of merriment.

Sir Godfrey was with him in two minutes. Whether he thought the box was really in danger of being so disposed of, is uncertain, but he popped round behind the scenes as quickly as possible.

"Capital, Grimaldi!" he cried, still laughing; "you have won me a wager—so ought to go snacks in it;" and he slipped five guineas into his hand.

"So, so," said the Duke of York, who, unperceived by Grimaldi, had followed his friend; "this is the way stakes are divided, eh?—I'll tell you what, Sir Godfrey, although Mr. Grimaldi is not a porter, I entertain no doubt that he would carry your box for you every evening upon such terms as these!"

Having vented this joke, his Royal Highness returned to his box. As he was not often behind the scenes at the theatre, this was, with one exception, the only time Grimaldi encountered him. The other occasion was in 1824, when his Royal Highness took the chair at the Theatrical Fund dinner, and kindly enquiring after his health, of some one who sat near him, desired to see him. He was officiating as one of the stewards, but was of course surprised at the Duke's wish, and immediately presented himself. He received him with great kindness, and hearing from his own lips that his infirmities had compelled him to relinquish the exercise of his profession, said, he was extremely sorry to hear him say so, but heartily trusted, notwithstanding, that he might recover yet, for his loss would be "a national calamity." He added, when Grimaldi expressed his acknowledgments, "I remember your father well; he was a funny man, and taught me and some of my sisters to dance. If ever I can be of any service to you, Grimaldi, call upon me freely."

George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, Grimaldi had often seen at Drury Lane in the earlier portion of his career; and the late King, then Duke of Clarence, was frequently at Covent Garden, where the contrast of his unpretending demeanour with the grimaces and absurdities of the young striplings of fashion and folly was the theme of general admiration, and of many remarks by no means complimentary to the wisdom of the young lords themselves. He mentions that on one occasion he entered the Covent Garden green-room rather suddenly, and was surprised to see the Duke of Clarence sitting there in conversation with two or three of his boys, whom he frequently took with him to the theatre. Somewhat confused and disconcerted, he bowed and was about to retreat, when the Duke said, "Nay, pray come in, Grimaldi."

"I beg your Royal Highness's pardon," he said: "I feared to intrude upon your conversation."

"Intrude!" echoed the Duke smiling. "No, no, I am the only intruder here." And rising from his seat, he would not resume it until Grimaldi had taken up his position near him.

The Covent Garden season terminated on the 17th of July, and his benefit at Sadlers Wells, which occurred two nights afterwards, being over, (the receipts were 243*l.* 16*s.*), he left town to fulfil the engagements he had entered into with country managers. He went first to Liverpool, where he acted from the 17th of July until the 19th of August: his profits amounted to 327*l.*, being two pounds and a few shillings more than the result of his previous visit. Thence he went to Lancaster, the theatre of which town, like the one at Berwick, he found up a stable-yard, but very neat and commodious. Here he played two nights, for which he received 111*l.* 16*s.* From this town he went to Newcastle, where he performed five nights, realising as his share of the profits 243*l.* 14*s.* While upon this last expedition, he received a letter from Mr. Harris, in which that gentleman informed him that it would be necessary for him to be in London by the 7th of September, to attend the opening of Covent Garden; in consequence of which he was obliged to forego his Edinburgh engagement with Mr. Murray, which annoyed him greatly, for he had calculated upon clearing pretty nigh five hundred pounds by that portion of his trip; besides, being at Newcastle, he was within one day's journey of Edinburgh. However, he was obliged to attend to the summons, and so returned to London, where a few days afterwards he encountered Mr. Harris, with whom he had the following vexatious colloquy.

"Ah, Joe!" he exclaimed with evident surprise, "why I did not expect to see you for three weeks to come!"

"You did not, sir?" exclaimed Grimaldi with at least an equal degree of astonishment.

"Certainly not: I thought you were going into Scotland."

"So I was: but I received a letter from you, recalling me to town by to-day; which summons I have obeyed by sacrificing my Edinburgh excursion, and with it about five hundred pounds."

"Ah!" said Mr. Harris, "I see now how all this is. I suppose you left Newcastle the same day you received my letter?"

"I did, sir."

"That was unfortunate; for I changed my mind after writing that letter, and wrote again on the following day, giving you permission to stay away until the first week of October. Never mind; as you *are* here, we'll find you something to do;—we'll try 'Mother Goose' for a night or two next week."

To this obliging promise he made no reply, not deriving the smallest degree of comfort from it. Mr. Harris, observing that his offer had failed in producing the intended effect, added, "And as to the loss of your Edinburgh engagement, that I must endeavour to make up to you in some way or other at a future time."

He thanked him for this kindness, and Mr. Harris did not forget the promise.

During his stay at Newcastle, he recollected that the best pickled salmon sold in London was called by that name and came from thence, and so resolved to have a feast of it, naturally concluding that he should procure it in high perfection in the place whence it was brought for sale. Accordingly, one evening he ordered some to be got ready for supper upon his return from the theatre; which the waiter at the hotel he was staying at promised should be done, but in so curious a manner that he could not help fancying he did not understand his meaning. He therefore asked him if he had heard what he said.

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" was the reply: "I'll take care it shall be ready, sir."

This appeared to settle the point, and as soon as the play was over he returned to the inn, anticipating how much better the salmon would be than the London pickle. The cloth was duly spread, and a covered dish placed before him.

"Supper, sir—quite ready, sir," said the waiter, whisking away the cover, and presenting to his sight a mutton cutlet. "You'll find this excellent, sir."

"No doubt; but I ordered pickled salmon!"

"I beg your pardon, sir,—did you, sir?" (with a slight appearance of confusion.)

"Did I! Yes, to be sure I did. Do you mean to say you do not recollect it?"

"I may have forgotten it, sir; I suppose I *have* forgotten it, sir."

"Well, it does not matter much; I can make a supper of this. But don't forget to let me have some pickled salmon to-morrow evening."

"Certainly not, sir," was the waiter's answer; and so the matter ended for that night.

On the following evening Grimaldi invited the manager at the close of the performances to go home and sup with him, which he willingly did. As on the preceding evening, the meal was prepared and awaiting their arrival. Down they sat, and upon the removal of the cover, a rump-steak presented itself. A good deal surprised, he said to the waiter—

"What's this! have you forgotten the pickled salmon again?"

"Why, really, sir, dear me!" hesitated the man,—"I believe I have—I really fancied you said you would have beef to-night, sir. To-morrow night, sir, I'll take care that you have some."

"Now, mind that you *do* remember it, for to-morrow is the last day I shall be here, and I have a particular wish to taste some before I leave the town."

"Depend upon me, sir,—you shall certainly have some to-morrow, sir," said the waiter. The manager preferred meat, so it was no great matter, and they took their hot supper very comfortably.

There was a crowded audience next night, which was Grimaldi's benefit and the last of his performance. He played Acres and Clown, received the cash, bade farewell to the manager, and hurried to his inn, greatly fatigued by his performance, and looking forward with much pleasure to the pickled salmon.

"All right to-night, waiter?" he inquired.

"*All* right to-night, sir," said the waiter, rubbing his hands. "Supper is quite ready, sir."

"Good! Let me have my bill to-night, because I start early in the morning."

Grimaldi turned to the supper-table: there was a dish, with a cover; the waiter removed it with a flourish, and presented to his astonished eyes—not the long-expected pickled salmon, but a veal-cutlet. These repeated disappointments were rather too much, so he pulled the bell with great vehemence and called for the landlord.

The landlord came, and Grimaldi having stated his grievance, he appeared to understand as little about the matter as his waiter; but at length, after many explanations, Grimaldi learned to his great surprise, that pickled salmon was an article unknown in Newcastle, all Newcastle pickled salmon being sent to London for sale. The brilliant waiter not having the remotest conception of what was wanted, and determined not to confess his ignorance, had resolved to try all the dishes in the most general request until he came to the right one.

Grimaldi saw a coal-mine on this expedition, his curiosity having been roused by the manager's glowing description. We should rather say that he went down into one, for his survey was brief enough. He descended some two or three hundred feet in a basket, and was met at the bottom of the shaft by a guide, who had not conducted him far, when a piece of coal, weighing about three tons, fell with a loud noise upon a spot over which they had just passed.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Grimaldi, greatly terrified. "What's that!"

"Hech!" said the guide, "it's only a wee bit of cool fallen doon: we ha'e that twa or three times a day."

"Have you?" replied Grimaldi, running back to the shaft. "Then I'll thank you to ring for my basket, or call out for it, for I'll stop here no longer."

The basket was lowered, and he ascended to the light without delay, having no wish whatever to take his chance again among the "wee bits of cool."

CHAPTER XXII.

1818 to 1823.

Profit and Loss.—Appearance of his Son at Covent Garden.—His last engagement at Sadlers Wells.—Accommodation of the Giants in the Dublin Pavilion.—Alarming state of his health.—His engagement at the Coburg.—The liberality of Mr. Harris.—Rapid decay of Grimaldi's constitution, his great sufferings, and last performance at Covent Garden.—He visits Cheltenham and Birmingham with great success.—Colonel Berkeley, Mr. Charles Kemble, and Mr. Bunn.

By his six weeks' excursion in 1818, Grimaldi cleared 682*l.* 12*s.*; but the disastrous result of the Sadlers Wells season and the expenditure of ready money in the purchase of his shares swallowed up nearly the whole of his gains in the provinces—so that notwithstanding his

great success and the enormous sums he had so recently acquired, the autumn of 1818 found him still poor, and entirely dependent on his salary for support. He looked forward, however, to the next season at Sadlers Wells in the hope that some success might repay a portion of the money he had already lost.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was "Harlequin Don Quixote," which was not quite so successful as the pantomimes at that house usually had been, although Grimaldi played Sancho Panza in the opening, and afterwards Clown. Its success was so equivocal, that another pantomime, called "Harlequin and Cinderella," was produced in April; but it had no greater success than its predecessor, for it went off but indifferently and did not run long. Having a few nights to spare in March, he accepted a theatrical invitation from Lynn in Norfolk, where he acted four nights and received one hundred and sixty pounds.

The opening of Sadlers Wells was attended by many difficulties and embarrassments. Only ten days before the commencement of the season, Mr. Charles Dibdin suddenly relinquished his post of acting stage-manager, and was with great difficulty prevailed upon to make the necessary arrangements for the first week. As he left the theatre at Whitsuntide and nobody could be found to supply his place, Grimaldi was obliged to fill it himself, and to relinquish, though with great unwillingness, his summer excursion, with all its advantages. He produced a new pantomime of his own invention, called "The Fates," which ran the whole of the season and drew very good houses. The result was, that when the books were made up at the end of the season, each of the proprietors had something to receive; which was a very agreeable improvement on the untoward prospects with which the preceding year had opened.

Gradually, but surely, during the whole of this year Grimaldi felt his health sinking, and heavy and painful infirmities creeping upon him. He learnt when it was too late, that if at this time he had retired from the profession, and devoted one or two years to relaxation and quiet, his constitution would in all probability have rallied, and he would have been enabled to resume his usual occupations, with every hope of being long able to perform them, instead of being compelled, as he eventually was, to quit the stage when he was little more than forty years old.

Between September 1819, when Covent Garden reopened, and Christmas, when the new pantomime was brought forward, Grimaldi frequently appeared as Kasrac in "Aladdin;" nor did his increasing infirmities render his performance more painful or wearisome than usual. The pantomime was called "Harlequin and Friar Bacon," and was exceedingly successful, as it was received with great approbation and was repeated for fifty-two nights. This season his son was for the first time regularly engaged at Covent Garden. He played Fribble in the opening, and afterwards the Lover (a character which has now become obsolete), and bade fair to become a great public favourite.

On the 23rd of April, Farley produced his melodrama of "Undine, or the Spirit of the Waters," in which Grimaldi also sustained a new character.

At Sadlers Wells a new system had been acted upon. The authorities being greatly puzzled in the choice of a stage-manager, and having received an offer from Mr. Howard Payne to take the theatre for one season at a certain rental, agreed to let it. Mr. Howard Payne commenced his campaign at Easter, and a most unprofitable one it proved, for he lost a considerable sum of money, as did the proprietors also, and Grimaldi not unnaturally began to be weary of the speculation. As both his benefits, however, were bumpers, he left the theatre in good spirits in the month of September, to fulfil an engagement at Dublin, little dreaming at the time, that with the exception of his farewell night, he was destined never again to act upon the Sadlers Wells stage.

Grimaldi's travelling companions were Ellar and his son, all three being engaged by Mr. Harris to act at his theatre in Dublin, and receiving permission to absent themselves from Covent Garden for that express purpose. Since his last journey to the Irish capital in 1805, roads and coaches had improved, and steam-packets had supplied the place of the old sailing-boats, so that they reached their destination in half the time which the same journey had occupied before.

The theatre in which they were to act was called the Pavilion, and had formerly been an assembly-room. It was perfectly round, and very ill adapted for dramatic representations; the stage room, too, was so inconvenient, and they were so pressed for want of space, that when "Harlequin Gulliver" was in preparation they were at a loss where to put the Brobdignagians. These figures were so very cumbersome and so much in the way, that the men who sustained the parts were at last obliged to be dressed and put away in an obscure corner before the curtain was raised, whence they were brought forward when wanted upon the stage, and into which they were obliged to retreat when they had no more to do, and to remain there as quietly as they could, until the pantomime was over, there being actually no room to get them out of their cases. The dresses and makings-up were very cumbrous and inconvenient; but no other mode of proceeding presented itself, and the unfortunate giants were obliged to make the best of a bad bargain, and to remain in a great state of perspiration and fatigue until they could be reduced to the level of ordinary men. Grimaldi pitied the poor fellows so much, that after the first night's performance was over, he thought right to represent to them that no relief could be afforded, and to ask whether they could make up their minds to endure so much labour for the future.

"Well, then," said the spokesman of the party, "we have talked it over together, and we have agreed to do it every night, if your honour,—long life to you!—will only promise to do one thing for us; and that is, just to let us have a leetle noggin of whisky after the green rag comes down."

This moderate request was readily complied with, and the giants behaved themselves exceedingly well, and never got drunk.

The party stayed seven weeks in Dublin. Grimaldi made a great deal of money by the trip, and realized by his benefit alone, two hundred pounds.

The pantomime at Covent Garden was called "Harlequin and Mother Bunch," in which both Grimaldi and his son were engaged. It was followed in April by the highly successful piece of "Cherry and Fair Star," in which Grimaldi played "Topac."

Sadlers Wells was let at Easter, for the ensuing three seasons, to Mr. Egerton, well known to the public as a performer at Covent Garden. He and Grimaldi had been very good friends for many years; but some clauses being introduced into his agreement for hiring the theatre which Grimaldi as a proprietor so strongly disapproved that he refused to affix his signature to the document, a coolness took place between them which was never afterwards removed. Notwithstanding this difference, he always continued to entertain a high respect for Egerton, who was greatly liked by his friends and the profession generally, and who had been at one period of his career a much better actor than the play-goers of the present day remember him. This gentleman was afterwards connected with Mr. Abbott in the management of the Victoria Theatre, in which speculation they both sustained considerable losses. He is since dead.

In the autumn, Ellar, Grimaldi, and his son, again repaired to Dublin, making a stay of five weeks at the Birmingham Theatre, which was then in the hands of Mr. Bunn. Here they got up the pantomime of "Friar Bacon," which was played to excellent houses for twenty-four nights. Mr. Bunn behaved on this occasion, as Grimaldi states he did upon every other in which he was concerned, with great liberality, allowing him a salary of twenty pounds per week, and the son nine pounds per week, independent of half a clear benefit, the profits of which were great.*

* In another part of the data upon which these Memoirs are founded, Grimaldi has the following remarks concerning this gentleman, which, as he appears to have been anxious that they should obtain publicity, the Editor subjoins in his own words:—"A great deal has been said about, and indeed against Mr. Bunn, since he has become a London manager; but I have had many opportunities of observing him and his mode of doing business, and I feel satisfied that he has most liberal notions, and would if it were in his power amply recompense according to their talents any *artiste* employed by him. I beg it may be understood that in this remark I do not allude in any way to myself; for, putting aside every consideration of what my talents might have been, my *name* alone stood so high as to ensure a full house at Birmingham:—I speak from what I know of his conduct with regard to others; and if even his industry meets with the success it deserves, I feel certain that the liberality of disposition which I have spoken of will be displayed in a commensurate degree."

At Dublin "Friar Bacon" was played twenty-nine nights out of the thirty-two for which Grimaldi and his party were engaged, and the pieces were so successful, that it would have been the interest of all parties to prolong their engagements if the arrangements at Covent Garden had admitted of their doing so. It was at this period that, with an agony of mind perfectly indescribable, Grimaldi found his health giving way by alarming degrees beneath the ravages of premature old age. On the eighteenth night of their performance in Dublin, he became so ill that he was obliged to throw up his part at a very short notice, and to send immediately for medical aid. He was attended by one of the most eminent physicians in Dublin, and under his treatment recovered sufficiently to be enabled to resume his character in about a week. But he felt, although he could not bear to acknowledge it even to himself, that his restoration to health was only temporary, that his strength was rapidly failing him, that his limbs grew weaker and his frame became more shaken every succeeding day, and that utter decrepitude, with its long train of miseries and privations, was coming upon him. His presentiments were but too fully realized; but the realization of his worst fears came upon him with a rapidity which even he, conscious as he was of all the symptoms, had never deemed possible.

The successful sojourn of the party at Dublin at length drew to a close, as it was necessary that they should return to London to be in readiness for the pantomime. On the 6th of December they bade farewell to Ireland, and after a most boisterous voyage landed at Holyhead, whence they posted in haste to town, and the day after their arrival began the rehearsals for Christmas. In his ill state of health, Grimaldi was terribly shaken by the journey home and the sea-sickness, and felt worse in point of general health than he had yet done.

The pantomime was "The Yellow Dwarf." Although the performers began to rehearse at an unusually late period, its success was perfect; but, notwithstanding that it ran forty-four nights, Grimaldi never thought it a favourite with the public. He himself played the Yellow Dwarf, and his son played a part called Guinea Pig. "Cherry and Fair Star" was revived at Easter, in consequence of its great success in the previous season, and answered the purpose extremely well.

During the whole of this summer Grimaldi's health gradually but steadily declined. Sometimes there were slight fluctuations for the better, in which he felt so much improved as to fancy that his strength was beginning to return; and although the next day's decay and lassitude showed but too clearly that they were brief intervals of strength, he fondly regarded these red-letter days as tokens of a real and permanent change for the better. Perhaps even now, as he had nothing to do at Sadlers Wells, and was too unwell to accept country engagements, if he had remained quiet during the Covent Garden recess, lived with great regularity, and acted upon the best medical advice, he might have retained for many years longer some portion of his health and spirits. But Mr. Glossop, who was then the lessee of the Coburg Theatre (now the Victoria), made him an offer which he could not resist, and he acted there for six weeks at a considerable sum per week and a free benefit. The engagement turned out so profitable a one for the Management, that he might have renewed it for the same space of time if he had not become too ill to appear upon the stage.

At this crisis of his disorder Grimaldi was advised to try the Cheltenham waters. He went to Cheltenham in August, and being somewhat recovered by the change of air, consented to act for Farley and Abbott, who had taken the theatre on speculation, for twelve nights. He cleared 150*l.*; and whether this sum of money, or the waters, or the change of scene, revived him, is uncertain, but he felt greatly improved in health when he returned to London for the opening of Covent Garden, to commence what ultimately proved to be his last season at that theatre.

"Harlequin and the Ogress, or the Sleeping Beauty," was the pantomime of the season. The rehearsals went off very briskly, and the piece, when it was produced, met with the success which generally attended the production of pantomimes at that house. Nothing indeed could exceed the liberality displayed by Mr. Harris in getting up this species of entertainment; to which circumstance, in a great measure, the almost uniform success of the pantomimes may be attributed. This spirit was not confined to the stage and its appointments, but was extended in an unusual degree to the actors also. Every suggestion was readily listened to, and as readily acted upon, if it appeared at all reasonable; every article of dress was provided at the expense of the Management; the principal actors were allowed a pint of wine each, every night the pantomime was played, and on the evening of its first representation they were invited to a handsome dinner at the Piazza Coffee-house, whither they all repaired directly the rehearsal was over. At these dinners Farley took the chair, while Brandon acted as vice; and there is no doubt that they materially contributed to the success of the pantomimes. There can be no better means of securing the hearty good-will and co-operation of the parties employed in undertakings of this or any other description than treating them in a spirit of generosity and courtesy.

In this pantomime Grimaldi played a part with the very pantomimic name of "Grimgribber;" and that sustained by his son was expressively described in the bills as "Whirligig." It ran until nearly the following Easter, when a new melodrama by Farley appeared, called "The Vision of the Sun, or the Orphan of Peru."

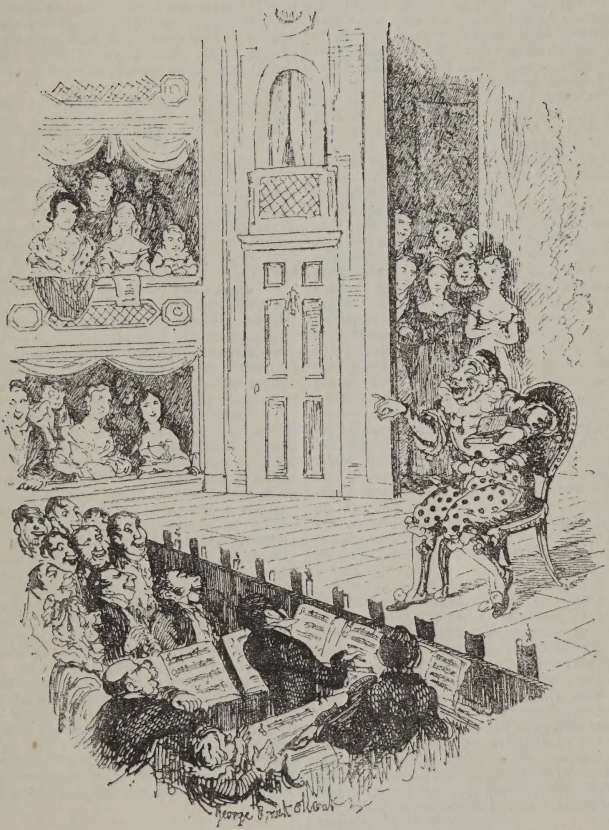
In this piece, which came out on the 23rd of March, 1823, Grimaldi played a prominent character; but even during the earlier nights of its very successful representation, he could scarcely struggle through his part. His frame was weak and debilitated, his joints stiff, and his muscles relaxed; every effort he made was followed by cramps and spasms of the most agonizing nature. Men were obliged to be kept waiting at the side-scenes, who caught him in their arms when he staggered from the stage, and supported him, while others chafed his limbs, —which was obliged to be incessantly done until he was called for the next scene, or he could not have appeared again. Every time he came off, his sinews were gathered up into huge knots by the cramps that followed his exertions, which could only be reduced by violent rubbing, and even that frequently failed to produce the desired effect. The spectators, who were convulsed with laughter while he was on the stage, little thought that while their applause was resounding through the house, he was suffering the most excruciating and horrible pains. But so it was until the twenty-fourth night of the piece, when he had no alternative, in consequence of his intense sufferings, but to throw up the part.

On the preceding night, although every possible remedy was tried, he could scarcely drag himself through the piece; and on this occasion it was only with the most extreme difficulty and by dint of extraordinary physical exertion and agony that he could conclude the performance, when he was carried to his dressing-room exhausted and powerless.

Here, when his bodily anguish had in some measure subsided, he began to reflect painfully and seriously on his sad condition. And when he remembered how long this illness had been hovering about him, how gradually it had crept over his frame and subdued his energies, with what obstinacy it had baffled the skill of the most eminent medical professors, and how utterly his powers had wasted away beneath it, he came to the painful conviction that his professional existence was over. Suffering from this terrible certainty a degree of mental anguish to which all his bodily sufferings were as nothing, he covered his face with his hands and wept like a child. The next morning, he sent word to the theatre that he was disabled by illness from performing.

His son studied the part in one day, and played it that night with considerable success. The piece was performed forty-four nights during the season; but although he afterwards rallied a little, he never attempted to resume the part. In spite of all his sufferings, which were great, and a settled foreboding that his course was run, it was some years before hope deserted him: and, for a long time, from day to day he encouraged hopes of being at some future period able to resume the avocations in which he had spent his life.

Grimaldi repaired again, in the month of August, to Cheltenham, recollecting that it had had some beneficial effect on his health in the previous year. During his stay, he so far recovered as to be enabled to play a few nights at the theatre, then under the management of Mr. Farley. Here he encountered Mr. Bunn, who informed him that Mr. Charles Kemble was then starring at Birmingham, and that Colonel Berkeley having promised to play for his benefit, he had come over to Cheltenham to ascertain what part the Colonel would wish to play. Mr. Bunn added, that he was there as much for the purpose of seeing Grimaldi as with any other object, as he wanted him to put a little money into both their purses by playing a few nights at Birmingham



THE LAST SONG. (See p. 25.)

Grimaldi declined at first, but, being pressed, and tempted by Mr. Bunn's offer, consented to act for two nights only, the receipts, whatever they might happen to be, to be divided between them.

It was Mr. Charles Kemble's benefit night when he and his son arrived at Birmingham; and as that gentleman was a great favourite there, as indeed he was everywhere throughout his brilliant career, Grimaldi entertained some fears that the circumstance would prove prejudicial to his interests. He sought a few moments' conversation with Mr. Kemble in the course of the evening, and informed him that his son had received an offer of eight pounds per week from the Drury Lane Management, but that rather than he should leave Covent Garden Theatre, with which his father had now been connected so long, and where he had experienced so much liberality, he was ready to accept an engagement there at six pounds per week if agreeable to the proprietors.

"Joe," said Mr. Charles Kemble, "your offer is a very handsome one, and I agree to it at once. Your son is now engaged with us on the terms you have mentioned."

They shook hands and parted. Grimaldi strolled into the green-room, and there met Colonel Berkeley, who, after a short conversation, said that he very much wished to play Valentine to his Orson: to which Grimaldi replied, it would give him great pleasure to afford him the opportunity whenever he felt disposed.

"Very well," said Colonel Berkeley, "then we will consider the matter settled. As soon as you have done here, you must come to Cheltenham for one night. I will make all necessary arrangements with Farley: your son shall play the Green Knight, and I will give you one hundred pounds as a remuneration. We will try what we can do together, Joe, to amuse the people."

Grimaldi had not intended to act again after his Birmingham engagement until the production of the Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden; but seeing that Colonel Berkeley was anxious to effect the arrangement, and feeling grateful for the liberality of his offer, he pledged himself without hesitation to accept his terms. The play was never done, however, by these three performers, for Grimaldi's theatrical career was over.

The night after Mr. Charles Kemble's benefit, Grimaldi produced a little pantomime of his own, called "Puck and the Puddings." The hit was so complete, and the sensation he excited so great, that he felt infinitely better than he had done for a long time, and was indeed so greatly restored that he was induced to accept an engagement for one additional night, the success of which equalled—it could not excel—that of the two previous evenings. When the curtain fell on the third night, Mr. Bunn presented him with 186*l.* 12*s.* as his share of the profits, accompanied with many wishes for his speedy and perfect restoration to health, which Grimaldi himself, judging from his unwonted spirits and vigour, cheerfully hoped might be yet in store for him.

These hopes were never to be realized; the enthusiastic reception he had met with,—unusually enthusiastic, even for him,—had roused him for a brief period, and called forth all his former energies only to hasten their final prostration. With the exception of his two farewell benefits, this was his last appearance, his final exit from the boards he had trodden from a child, the last occasion of his calling forth those peals of merriment and approbation which, cheerfully as they sounded to him, had been surely ringing his death-knell for many years.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1823 to 1827.

His great afflictions augmented by the dissipation and recklessness of his Son.—He is compelled to retire from Covent Garden Theatre, and is succeeded by him.—New Speculation at Sadlers Wells.—Changes in the system of Management, and their results.—Sir James Scarlett and a blushing Witness.

FROM the period at which we have now arrived, down to within a year or so of his death, Grimaldi experienced little or nothing but one constant succession of afflictions and calamities, the pressure of which nearly bowed him to the earth; afflictions which it is painful to contemplate, and a detailed account of which would be neither instructive nor entertaining. A tale of unmitigated suffering, even when that suffering be mental, possesses but few attractions for the reader; but when, as in this case, a large portion of it is physical, it loses even the few attractions which the former would possess, and grows absolutely distasteful. Bearing these circumstances in mind we shall follow Grimaldi's example in this particular, and study in the remaining pages of his life to touch as lightly as we can upon the heavy catalogue of his calamities, and to lay no unnecessary stress upon this cheerless portion of his existence.

Grimaldi slept at Birmingham the night after his closing performance, and on the following morning returned to Cheltenham, where he was attacked by a severe and alarming illness which for more than a month confined him to his bed, whence he rose at last a cripple for life.

Independent of these sufferings of the body, he had to encounter mental afflictions of no ordinary kind. He was devotedly attached to his son, who was his only child, for whom he had always entertained the most anxious solicitude, whom he had educated at a great expense, and upon whom a considerable portion of the earnings of his best days had been most liberally bestowed. Up to this time he had well repaid all the care and solicitude of his parents: he had risen gradually in the estimation of the public, had increased every year in prosperity, and still remained at home, his father's friend and companion. It is matter of pretty general notoriety that the young man ran a reckless and vicious course, and in time so shocked and disgusted even those who were merely brought into contact with him at the theatre for a few hours in a night, that it was found impossible to continue his engagements.

The first notification his father received of his folly and extravagance was during their stay at Cheltenham, when one morning, shortly after he had risen from his sick-bed, he was waited upon by one of the town authorities, who informed him that his son was then locked up for some drunken freaks committed overnight. He instantly paid everything that was demanded, and procured his release; but in some skirmish with the constables he had received a severe blow on the head from a staff, which, crushing his hat, alighted on the skull and inflicted a desperate wound. It is supposed that this unfortunate event disordered his intellects, as from that time, instead of the kind and affectionate son he had previously been, he became a wild and furious savage; he was frequently attacked with dreadful fits of epilepsy, and continually committed actions which nothing but madness could prompt. In 1828 he had a decided attack of insanity, and was confined in a strait waistcoat in his father's house for some time. As no disorder of mind had appeared in him before, and as his miserable career may be dated from this time, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the wound he received at Cheltenham was among the chief causes of his short-lived delirium.

They returned to London together, and for the next three months Grimaldi consulted the most eminent medical men in the hope of recovering some portion of his lost health and strength. During that time he suffered an intensity of anxiety which it is difficult to conceive, as their final decision upon the remotest probability of his recovery was postponed from day to day. All their efforts were in vain, however. Towards the end of October he received a final intimation that it was useless for him to nourish any hope of recovering the use of his limbs, and that although nature, assisted by great care on his part and the watchfulness of his medical attendants, might certainly alleviate some of his severe pains, his final recovery was next to impossible, and he must make up his mind to relinquish every thought of resuming the exercise of his profession.

Among the gentlemen to whose kindness and attention he was greatly indebted in this stage of his trials, were Sir Astley Cooper, Sir Matthew Tierney, Mr. Abernethy, Dr. Farr, Dr. Temple, Dr. Uwins, Dr. Mitchell, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. James Wilson. To all these gentlemen he was personally unknown; but they all attended him gratuitously, and earnestly requested him to apply to them without reserve upon every occasion when it was at all likely that they could be of the slightest assistance.

It was with no slight despair that Grimaldi received the announcement that for the rest of his days he was a cripple, possibly the constant inmate of a sick-room, and that he had not even a distant prospect of resuming the occupations to which he had been attached from his cradle, and from which he was enabled up to this time to realize an annual income of fifteen hundred pounds: and all this without any private fortune or resources, with the exception of his shares in Sadlers Wells Theatre, which had hitherto proved a dead loss. For some hours

after this opinion of his medical men had been communicated to him, he sat stupefied with the heaviness of the calamity, and fell into a state of extreme mental distress, from which it was a long time before he was thoroughly roused. As soon as he could begin to exercise his reason, he recollected that it was a duty he owed his employers to inform them of his inability to retain his situation at Covent Garden, the more especially as it was time they made some arrangements for the ensuing Christmas pantomime. Accordingly he sent a note to the theatre, acquainting them with his melancholy condition, and the impossibility of his fulfilling his articles (which had only been entered into in the preceding January, and were for three years), and recommending them to engage without loss of time some other individual to supply his place.

The communication was received with much kindness, and many good wishes for his recovery, After several interviews and much consideration, it was resolved that his son, J. S. Grimaldi, should be brought out as principal Clown in the ensuing Christmas pantomime. He appeared, for the first time in that character, in the pantomime of "Harlequin and Poor Robin, or the House that Jack built;" and his success was complete. His father sat in the front of the house on his first night, and was no less gratified by his reception in public, than by the congratulations which poured upon him when he went round to the stage and found everybody delighted with the result of the trial. The pantomime proved very successful; it had an extended run, and the proprietors of the theatre, highly satisfied with the young man's success, with much liberality cancelled his existing articles, which were for 6*l.* per week, and entered into a new agreement by which they raised his salary to 8*l.* To Grimaldi also, they behaved in a most handsome manner; for although his regular salary was, as a matter of course, stopped from the day on which he communicated his inability to perform, they continued to allow him 5*l.* a week for the remainder of the season; an act of much consideration and kindness on their part, and a far greater token of their recollection of his services than he had ever expected to receive.

The three years for which Egerton had taken Sadlers Wells having now expired, he was requested by the proprietors to state what views he entertained as to retaining or giving up the property. It being found impossible to comply with his terms, and a Mr. Williams, who at that time had the Surrey, having made an offer for the theatre, they agreed to let it to him for one season.

Soon after this agreement was entered into, Williams called upon Grimaldi one morning upon business, and in the course of the interview the latter inquired by what plan he proposed to make both theatres answer.

"Why, Mr. Grimaldi," replied Williams, "if two theatres could be kept open at the same expense as one, and the company equally—mind, I say *equally*—good, don't you think it very likely that the speculation would succeed?"

"Yes, I think it would," rejoined Grimaldi, doubtfully, for as yet he understood nothing of the manager's drift; "I think it would."

"And so do I, said the other; "and that's the way I mean to manage. I mean to work the two theatres with one and the same company: I mean to employ one half the company in the earlier part of the evening at Sadlers Wells, and then to transfer them to the Surrey, to finish there;—at that theatre I shall do precisely the same: and I am now having carriages built expressly to convey them backwards and forwards."

This system, which has since been tried (without the carriages) at the two great houses, was actually put in practice. On Easter Monday, 1824, the carriages began to run, and the two seasons commenced. The speculation turned out, as Grimaldi had anticipated, a dead failure: the lessee lost some money himself, and got greatly into debt with the proprietors; upon which, fearing to increase their losses, they took measures to recover possession of the theatre. When they obtained it, they were obliged to finish the season themselves; by which, as they had never contemplated such a proceeding, and had made no preparations for it, they sustained a very considerable loss.

In this year Grimaldi was much troubled by pecuniary matters, and the conduct of his son. He was living on the few hundred pounds he had put by, selling out his stock, spending the proceeds, and consequently rising every morning a poorer man. His son, who had now a good salary and was rising in his profession, suddenly left his home, and, to the heart-rending grief of his father and mother, abandoned himself to every species of wild debauchery and riot. His father wrote him, imploring him to return, and offering to make every arrangement that could conduce to his comfort; but he never answered the letter, and kept on his headlong course. This shock was a heavy one indeed, and, in Grimaldi's weak and debilitated state, almost broke his heart.

For four years Grimaldi never saw any more of his son, save occasionally on the stage of Sadlers Wells, where he was engaged at a salary of five pounds per week; or when he met him in the street, when the son would cross over the road to get out of the way. Nor during all this time did he receive a single line from him, except once in 1825. He had written to the young man, describing the situation to which he was reduced and the poverty with which he was threatened, reminding him that between the two theatres he was now earning thirteen pounds per week, and requesting his assistance with some pecuniary aid. To this application he at first returned no reply; but several of Grimaldi's friends having expressed a very strong opinion to him on the subject, he at length returned the following note:—

"Dear Father,

"At present I am in difficulties; but as long as I have a shilling you shall have half."

This assurance looked well enough upon paper, but had no other merit, for he never sent his father a farthing, nor did he again see him, (save that he volunteered his services at his two farewell benefits,) until he came to his door one night in 1828, and hardily claimed shelter and food.

In 1825 the proprietors of Sadlers Wells resolved to open the theatre on their joint account, with which view they secured the services of Mr. T. Dibdin as acting-manager. It was determined at a meeting of proprietors, that it would be advantageous to the property if one of their number were resident on the premises, to assist Mr. Dibdin and regulate the expenditure. As Grimaldi had nothing to do, it was proposed in the kindest manner by Mr. Jones, one of the shareholders, that he should fill the situation at a salary of four pounds per week. It need scarcely be said that he accepted this proposal with great gratitude. They commenced the season with much spirit, turning the old dwelling-house partly into wine-rooms according to the old fashion, and partly into a saloon, box-office, and passages. The dresses of the opening piece were of a gorgeous description, and every new play was got up with the same magnificence. They also determined to take half-price, which had never before been done at that house, and to play the twelve months through, instead of confining the season to six; this last resolution originating in the immense growth of the neighbourhood around the theatre, which in Grimaldi's time had gradually been transformed from a pretty suburban spot into the maze of streets and squares and closely-clustered houses which it now presents. These arrangements were all very extensive and speculative; but they overstepped the bounds of moderation in point of expense, and the season ended with a loss of 1400*l.*

Next year they pursued a different plan, and reduced their expenditure in every department. This reduction was superintended by Grimaldi, and the very first salary he cut down was his own, from which he struck off at once two pounds per week. They tried pony-races too in the area attached to the theatre, and, (so variable is theatrical property,) cleared a sum equal to their losses of the preceding year, between Easter and Whitsuntide alone. The following season was also a successful one, and at length he began to think he should gain something by the proprietorship.

It was about this time, or rather before, that Grimaldi was subpœnaed as a witness in an action between two theatrical gentlemen, of whom Mr. Glossop was one, when his smart parrying of a remark from a counsel engaged in the case occasioned much laughter in court.

On his name being called and his appearing in the witness-box, there was some movement in the court, which was very crowded, the people being anxious to catch a sight of a witness whose name was so familiar. Sir James Scarlett, who was to examine him, rose as he made his appearance, and, looking at him with great real or apparent interest, said, "Dear me! Pray, sir, are you the great Mr. Grimaldi, formerly of Covent Garden Theatre?"

The witness felt greatly confused at this inquiry, especially as it seemed to excite to a still higher pitch the curiosity of the spectators. He reddened slightly

and replied, "I used to be a pantomime actor, sir, at Covent Garden Theatre."

"Yes," said Sir James Scarlett. "I recollect you well. You are a very clever man, sir." He paused for a few seconds, and, looking up in his face, said—

"And so you really are Grimaldi, are you?"

This was more embarrassing than the other question, and Grimaldi feeling it so, fidgeted about in the box, and grew redder and redder.

"Don't blush, Mr. Grimaldi, pray don't blush; there is not the least occasion for blushing," said Sir James Scarlett.

"I don't blush, sir," rejoined the witness.

"I assure you, you need not blush so."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I really am not blushing," repeated the witness, who beginning to grow angry, repeated it with so red a face, that the spectators tittered aloud.

"I assure you, Mr. Grimaldi," said Sir James Scarlett, smiling, "that you *are* blushing violently."

"I beg your pardon, sir, replied Grimaldi, "but you really are quite mistaken. The flush which you observe on my face, is a *Scarlet* one, I admit; but I assure you that it is nothing more than a reflection from your own."

The people in the court shouted with laughter, and Sir James Scarlett joining in their mirth, proceeded without further remark with the business of the case.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1828.

Great kindness of Miss Kelly towards Grimaldi.—His farewell benefit at Sadlers Wells; last appearance, and farewell address.—He makes preparations for one more appearance at Covent Garden, but, in a conversation with Mr. Charles Kemble, meets with a disappointment.—In consequence of Lord Segrave's benevolent interference, a benefit is arranged for him at Drury Lane.—His last interview with Mr. Charles Kemble and Fawcett.

In February, 1828, a very highly-esteemed and kind friend to Grimaldi, and an actress of deserved popularity, whose wonderful talents have gained for her universal praise and an ample fortune, and whose performances have been for many years the delight and admiration of the public—Miss Kelly,—called at his house to inquire after his health, and to ascertain whether it was probable that he would ever again be enabled to appear upon the stage. He replied, with natural emotion, that he could no longer dare even to hope that he should ever act more.

"Then," asked Miss Kelly, "why not take a farewell benefit? I dare say you are not so rich as to despise the proceeds of such an undertaking."

Grimaldi shook his head, and replying that he was much poorer than anybody supposed, proceeded to lay before her his exact situation, not omitting to point out, that whenever Sadlers Wells was again let by the proprietors, he would certainly lose his situation, and thus be deprived of his sole dependence. As to taking a benefit, he said, he felt so ill and depressed, that he could not venture to undergo the labour of getting one up, far less would his pecuniary means warrant his incurring the chance of a loss.

"Leave it all to me," said Miss Kelly, "and I'll arrange pretty nearly everything for you without a moment's loss of time. There must be two benefits, one at Sadlers Wells, and the other at Covent Garden. The former benefit must take place first, so you go and consult the proprietors upon the subject at once, and I'll lose no time in furthering your interests elsewhere."

The promptitude and decision which Miss Kelly so kindly evinced, infused something of a similar spirit into the invalid. He promised that he would see the proprietors immediately; and, in spite of a severe attack of spasms, which almost deprived him of speech, went that same night to Sadlers Wells, and stated his intention to take a farewell benefit. He was received with the greatest friendship and liberality; they at once entered into his views, and gave an unanswerable proof of the sincerity with which they did so, by offering him the use of the house gratuitously. Monday, March the 17th, was fixed for the occasion; and no sooner was it known decidedly when the benefit was to take place, than Mr. T. Dibdin assembling the company, acquainted them with the circumstance, and suggested that their offering to play gratuitously would be both a well-timed compliment and a real assistance. The hint was no sooner given than it was most cheerfully responded to; the performers immediately proffered their services, the band did the same, and every person in the theatre was anxious and eager to render every assistance in his or her power, and to "put their shoulders to the wheel, in behalf of poor old Joe."

The following is a copy of the bill of performance put forth on this occasion:—

SADLERS WELLS.

MR. GRIMALDI'S NIGHT,

And Last Appearance at this Theatre.

Monday, March 17, 1828.

"It is most respectfully announced that Mr. Grimaldi, from severe and incessant indisposition, which has oppressed him upwards of four years and continues without any hope of amelioration, finds himself compelled to quit a profession in which, from almost infancy, he has been honoured with as great a share of patronage and indulgence as ever fell to the lot of any candidate for public favour. Nor can he quit a theatre where his labours commenced, and were for so many years sanctioned, without attempting the honour of personally expressing his gratitude; and however inadequate he may prove to paint the sincerity of his feelings, it is his intention to offer an address of thanks to his friends and patrons, and conclude his services with the painful duty of bidding them

"FAREWELL.

"The entertainments will commence with the successful romance of 'Sixes, or the Fiend;' Hock (a drunken prisoner) by Mr. Grimaldi. After which, the favourite burletta of 'Humphrey Clinker;' to which will be added the popular farce of 'Wives and Partners;' and the whole to conclude with a grand Masquerade on the stage, in the course of which several novelties will be presented: Mr. Blackmore on the *corde volante;* Mr. Walbourn's dance as Dusty Bob; Mr. Campbell's song of 'Bound 'Prentice to a Waterman;' Mrs. Searle's skipping-rope dance; Mr. Payne's juggling evolutions; and the celebrated dance between Mr. J. S. Grimaldi and Mr. Ellar. After which, Mr. Grimaldi will deliver his farewell address: and the whole will conclude with a brilliant display of fireworks, expressive of

"GRIMALDI'S THANKS."

The house was crowded to suffocation on the night. He performed the trifling part for which he had been announced in the first piece with considerable difficulty but immense approbation, and in the stage of the performances in which it was announced in the bills of the day, came forward to deliver his Farewell Address, which ran thus:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I appear before you this evening for the last time at this theatre. Doubtless, there are many persons present who think that I am a very aged man: I have now an opportunity of convincing them to the contrary. I was born on the 18th of December, 1779, and, consequently, on the 18th of last December, attained the age of forty-eight.

"At a very early age—before that of three years—I was introduced to the public by my father at this theatre; and ever since that period have I held a situation in this establishment. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I have been engaged at this theatre for five-and-forty years.

"By strict attention, perseverance, and exertion, did I arrive at the height of my profession, and proud I am to acknowledge, have ofttimes been honoured with your smiles, approbation, and support. It is now three years since I have taken a regular engagement, owing to extreme and dangerous indisposition: with patience have I waited in hopes my health might once more be re-established, and I again meet your smiles as before;—but, I regret to say, there is little, or, in fact, no improvement perceivable, and it would therefore now be folly in me ever to think of again returning to my professional duties. I could not, however, leave this theatre without returning my grateful thanks to my friends and patrons, and the public; and now do I venture to offer them, secure in the conviction that they will not be slighted or deemed utterly unworthy of acceptance.

"To the proprietors of this theatre, the performers, the gentlemen of the band—in fact, to every individual connected with it—I likewise owe and offer my sincere

thanks for their assistance upon this evening. And now, ladies and gentlemen, it only remains for me to utter one dreadful word, ere I depart—Farewell!—God bless you all! may you and your families ever enjoy the blessings of health and happiness!—Farewell!"

He was received and listened to in the kindest and most encouraging manner; but his spirits met with so severe a shock in bidding a formal farewell to his friends, that he did not entirely recover from the effects of it for some days, and so completely dreaded going through a similar ordeal at Covent Garden, that had not Miss Kelly kept him firm to the task, he would have abandoned his intention with regard to the latter place altogether.

The receipts of this benefit were 230*l.*; but he received a great number of anonymous letters, containing remittances, which amounted in the whole to 85*l.* more; so that he cleared by the night's performance a total of 315*l.*, which was a well-timed and most fortunate assistance to him.

Some short time after this evening, Mr. T. Dibdin left Sadlers Wells. He was succeeded in the capacity of stage-manager by Mr. Campbell, who retained the situation with credit to himself and satisfaction to the proprietors for several years: remaining in it, in fact, until the establishment was again let.

On the 25th of March, being a little recovered, and having at last made up his mind to take the second benefit, Grimaldi walked to Covent Garden, and having been warmly welcomed by the performers, went to Mr. Charles Kemble's room, and was received by him in the most friendly manner.

"Well, Joe," said he, "I hope you have come to say that you feel able to be with us again?"

"Indeed, my dear sir, it is unfortunately quite the reverse; for I am come to tell you that I never shall act more."

"I am very sorry to hear you say so, Joe; I had been in hopes it would be otherwise," returned Mr. Kemble.

"We have known each other a good many years, sir," said Grimaldi.

"We have indeed, Joe,—many years!"

"And I think, sir," continued Grimaldi, "that if it were in your power, you would willingly serve me?"

"Try me, Joe, try me!"

He then stated his intention of taking a farewell benefit at Covent Garden, and requested Mr. Kemble's assistance in obtaining the use of the house if possible at a low price; but if not, then upon the usual terms.

Mr. Kemble listened until he had finished, and said, "My dear Joe, I perfectly understand you; and if the theatre were solely mine, I should say 'Take it—'tis yours, and without charge at all:' but, unfortunately, our theatre is in Chancery, and nothing can be done without the consent of others. However, Joe, the proprietors meet every Tuesday, and I will mention it to them. So after Tuesday you shall hear from me."

He thanked Mr. Kemble, and they parted. He awaited the arrival of the day fixed in great anxiety; but it came and passed, and so did another Tuesday, and several more days, without any intelligence arriving to relieve his suspense. Seeing it announced in the papers that Mr. Kemble was about to proceed to Edinburgh, to act there, he wrote a note to him, reminding him of what had passed between them, and requesting a reply. This was on the 13th of April. In the evening of the same day he received an answer, not from Mr. Kemble himself, but from Mr. Robertson, the respected treasurer of the theatre, which ran thus:—

"Dear Sir,

"I am directed by the proprietors of this theatre to acquaint you, in reply to your application relative to a benefit, that they much regret that the present situation of the theatre with regard to Chancery proceedings will prevent the possibility of their accommodating your wishes."

The contents of this letter, of course greatly disappointed and vexed Grimaldi, who, remembering the number of years he had been connected with the theatre, and the great favourite he had been with the public, could not help deeming it somewhat harsh and unkind conduct on the part of the proprietors to refuse him the house for one night, for which of course he would have paid.

Mr. Price was the lessee of Drury Lane at this time, and once or twice Grimaldi thought of applying to him, but fearing it would be useless, dismissed the idea. In this state of indecision two or three weeks passed away, when one day he received a note from Mr. Dunn, the Drury Lane treasurer, requesting him to attend at the theatre at twelve o'clock next day, as Mr. Price wished to see him. On complying with this very unexpected invitation, he was informed by Mr. Dunn, that the lessee had been compelled to meet another party on business, and therefore could not wait to see him; but that he was deputed to say, that he had been apprised of Grimaldi's wish to take a benefit, and that the theatre was at his service for the evening of Friday, June 27th, 1828, the last night but one of the season. "That," added Mr. Dunn, "is unfortunately the only evening we can offer you. Had Mr. Price known earlier of your wishes, you would have had an extended choice of nights, and he would have felt happy in obliging so distinguished a veteran."

Much delighted with this politeness and consideration, he gratefully accepted the theatre for the night mentioned. He was much puzzled at the time to think who could have mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Price, and befriended him so greatly; on mature consideration, however, he had little doubt that it was Lord Segrave, to whom he was obliged, for when he told Miss Kelly that he had been offered Drury Lane, she remembered Lord Segrave having expressed great surprise when she told him he had been refused Covent Garden, and his having added, that "he should see Price shortly."

Every assistance that could be afforded him in arranging his benefit was cheerfully rendered. To three gentlemen in particular, for the valuable and cordial aid they rendered to the indefatigable exertions of Miss Kelly, he was under deep and lasting obligations. These were, Mr. James Wallack, Mr. W. Barrymore, and Mr. Peake, scarcely less a favourite with the public than with the members of the profession, to the literature of which his abilities and humour have been long and successfully devoted.

About the middle of June, hearing that Mr. Charles Kemble had returned from the North, Grimaldi resolved to call upon him, and to thank him for the exertions which he felt assured he had made relative to his benefit. He had another object in view,—which was, to apprise him that he had entered into engagements of a satisfactory nature at Drury Lane; which intelligence he hoped would afford him unmitigated satisfaction, after the strong desire he had always expressed for his prosperity.

Mr. Charles Kemble was alone when Grimaldi was shown up to his room; he said, that having recently heard Mr. Kemble had returned from Scotland, he had determined to lose no time in calling to thank him for the exertions which he had no doubt he had made to enable him to take a benefit at Covent Garden. Although his kindness had been unavailing, he was anxious to assure him that he perfectly appreciated it. He then went on to say, that Mr. Price had in the handsomest manner offered the use of Drury Lane Theatre, at which he was to take a benefit on the 27th; and that he had every reason to believe, from the interest which was making for him, that it would be a very great one.

Mr. Kemble was evidently surprised to hear this, and instead of manifesting the gratification which Grimaldi had expected, evinced feelings of a directly opposite nature. At length he exclaimed, "Take a benefit at Drury Lane!"

"Yes, sir," replied Grimaldi; "and knowing that you feel a great interest in my success, I have called upon you to thank you for all your past kindness, and to inform you what I intend doing on my farewell night."

With these words, he placed in Mr. Kemble's hands an announce bill, of which we subjoin a copy. These bills were afterwards recalled, for reasons which will presently appear.

"THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

"MR. GRIMALDI'S LAST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC,

"On Friday, June 27th, 1828.

"It is respectfully announced, that Mr. Grimaldi, after more than four years of severe and unremitting indisposition, which continues without hope of alleviation, is compelled, finally, to relinquish a profession in which, from infancy, he has been honoured with as liberal a share of public patronage as ever has been accorded to candidates of much higher pretensions.

"Numerous patrons having expressed surprise tha

Mr. Grimaldi's benefit did not take place at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, he takes the liberty of stating, that after bidding farewell to his friends and supporters at Sadlers Wells, (the scene of his favoured exertions from the early age of three years,) he applied to the present directors of Covent Garden Theatre, who, in the kindest manner, expressed their regret that the well-known situation of the theatre precluded the possibility of indulging their strong inclination to comply with the request he had ventured to prefer. On transferring the application to Mr. Price, the lessee of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Mr. Grimaldi has the pleasure to say, that it was acceded to with a celerity which enhanced the obligation, and demands his most sincere acknowledgment.

"Mr. Grimaldi made his first appearance at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, where he continued twenty-four years, and, but for a very trifling misunderstanding, might have retained his engagement to the present time: it is, however, most grateful to his feelings to finish his public labours on the spot where they commenced, and where for nearly a quarter of a century his exertions were fostered by public indulgence, and stimulated by public applause.

"To many anxious friends who, from a genuine spirit of good-will, have inquired the cause why, during so long a period of professional exertion, Mr. Grimaldi has not been able to realize a competency that might have precluded the necessity of this appeal, he can only plead the expenses attendant on infirmities, produced by exhausting and laborious duties, the destructive burthen of which were felt some years before he finally yielded to their pressure, and which at length compelled him to relax his exertions at the period when ability to continue them would have insured him a comfortable independence. However inadequate he may prove to the painful yet pleasing endeavour to express personally his gratitude on the night of his retreat, it is his intention to offer an address of thanks, in which, though mere words may not be equal to paint the depth and sincerity of his feelings, he will hope to gain credit for the heartfelt sensation of dutiful respect which accompanies his last farewell."

Mr. Kemble read the bill through very attentively, and laid it gently upon the table without saying a word, but still looking very much displeased. Grimaldi, not knowing very well what to say, remained silent, and nothing was said for a minute, when Fawcett entered the room.

"Here, Fawcett," said Mr. Kemble, "here's a bill for you: read that."

Fawcett read it in profound silence, and when he had done so, looked as if he could not at all understand what was going forward, or what he ought to do. At length he asked what he was to infer from it, and Mr. Kemble was about to reply, when Grimaldi interrupted him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but if Mr. Fawcett is to be appealed to in this business, it is but just that before he expresses any opinion upon it, he should understand all the circumstances."

With this, he proceeded to detail them as briefly as he could. When he had finished, Mr. Kemble said, with an air of great vexation, "Why did you not say, that if you could not take a benefit here, you would do so at the other house? I declare you should have had a night for nothing, sooner than you should have gone there."

Although this remark was very unexpected, Grimaldi made no further reply than that he had never thought of applying to Mr. Price, but that that gentleman, he presumed at the solicitation of some unknown friend, had made an offer to him; he then begged Mr. Fawcett, as he now knew all, to express his opinion upon the matter..

"Why really," said that gentleman, "had I been situated as Grimaldi has been, I should certainly have acted as he has done. If one theatre could not accommodate me and another could, I should feel no hesitation in accepting an offer from the latter. However," added Mr. Fawcett, after this very manly and straightforward avowal, "I think it would be best, Grimaldi, and I hope you will take my advice, not to send out this bill. It might be deemed offensive, and cannot, as I see, be productive of any good whatever."

Grimaldi thanked him, and expressed his intention of acting upon his opinion. Addressing Mr. Kemble, he said, that from what had just before fallen from him, it appeared that if he had thought proper, he (Grimaldi) might have had Covent Garden for his benefit, even gratuitously; but that presuming he had not the power of taking a benefit at Drury-lane, he had refused him, which was not the conduct of a friend, and was very unlike the treatment he had expected to receive. He then left the room, and never saw either gentleman again.

Upon cool reflection he was inclined to consider that Mr. Kemble had some private and very good reasons, arising out of the management of the theatre, for acting as he had done, which there is little doubt was the case, as he could have had neither the intention nor the wish to injure a man whom he invariably treated with kindness and courtesy.

The stage has now lost the services of both these gentlemen. Poor Fawcett died some time since, and Mr. Charles Kemble has retired from the boards of which he was so long, both from his public and private character, a shining ornament.

CHAPTER XXV.

1828 to 1836.

The farewell benefit at Drury Lane.—Grimaldi's Last appearance and parting address.—The Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, and its prompt reply to his communication.—Miserable career and death of his Son.—His wife dies, and he returns from Woolwich (whither he had previously removed) to London.—His retirement.

THE three gentlemen who were mentioned in conjunction with Miss Kelly, in the course of the last chapter, exerted themselves with so much energy, that Grimaldi's benefit far exceeded his most sanguine expectations. In addition to the most effective company of the theatre, were secured the services of Miss Kelly, and Madam Fearon, Miss Fanny Ayton, Miss Love, Matthews, Keeley, and Bartley, besides an immense number of pantomime performers, who crowded to offer their aid, and among whom were—Barnes, Southby, Ridgway and his two sons, and young Grimaldi. Mr. James Wallack arranged everything, and exerted himself as much as he could have done if the night had been his own. The announced bill ran thus:—

Mr. GRIMALDI'S FAREWELL BENEFIT.

On Friday, June 27th, 1828,

will be performed,

JONATHAN IN ENGLAND;

after which,

A MUSICAL MELANGE.

To be succeeded by

THE ADOPTED CHILD,

and concluded with

HARLEQUIN HOAX,

In which Mr. Grimaldi will act clown in one scene, sing a song, and speak his

FAREWELL ADDRESS.

It was greatly in favour of the benefit, that Covent Garden had closed the night before: the pit and galleries were completely filled in less than half an hour after opening the doors, the boxes were very good from the first, and at half-price were as crowded as the other parts of the house. In the last piece Grimaldi acted one scene, but being wholly unable to stand, went through it seated upon a chair. Even in this distressing condition he retained enough of his old humour to succeed in calling down repeated shouts of merriment and laughter. The song too, in theatrical language, "went" as well as ever; and at length, when the pantomime approached its termination, he made his appearance before the audience in his private dress, amidst thunders of applause. As soon as silence could be obtained, and he could muster up sufficient courage to speak, he advanced to the footlights, and delivered, as well as his emotions would permit, the following Farewell Address.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—In putting off the clown's garment, allow me to drop also the clown's taciturnity, and address you in a few parting sentences. I entered early on this course of life, and leave it prematurely. Eight-and-forty years only have passed over my head—but I am going as fast down the hill of life as that older Joe—John Anderson. Like vaulting ambition, I have overleaped myself, and pay the penalty in an advanced old age. If I have now any aptitude for tumbling, it is through bodily infirmity, for I am worse on my feet than I used to be on my head. It is four years since I jumped

my last jump—filched my last oyster—boiled my last sausage—and set in for retirement. Not quite so well provided for, I must acknowledge, as in the days of my clownship, for then, I dare say, some of you remember, I used to have a fowl in one pocket and sauce for it in the other.

"To-night has seen me assume the motley for a short time—it clung to my skin as I took it off, and the old cap and bells rang mournfully as I quitted them for ever.

"With the same respectful feelings as ever, do I find myself in your presence—in the presence of my last audience—this kindly assemblage so happily contradicting the adage that a favourite has no friends. For the benevolence that brought you hither—accept, ladies and gentlemen, my warmest and most grateful thanks, and believe that, of one and all, Joseph Grimaldi takes a double leave, with a farewell on his lips, and a tear in his eyes.

"Farewell! that you and yours may ever enjoy that greatest earthly good—health, is the sincere wish of your faithful and obliged servant. God bless you all!"

It was with no trifling difficulty that Grimaldi reached the conclusion of this little speech, although the audience cheered loudly, and gave him every possible expression of encouragement and sympathy. When he had finished, he still stood in the same place, bewildered and motionless, his feelings being so greatly excited, that the little power illness had left, wholly deserted him. In this condition he stood for a minute or two, when Mr. Harley, who was at the side scene, commiserating his emotion, kindly advanced and led him off the stage, assisted by his son. As a token of his respect and gratitude, Grimaldi took off a new wig which he wore on the occasion, and presented it to Mr. Harley, together with the original address, which he had held in his hand. Our friend has them both, carefully preserved in a small museum of wigs, autographs, portraits, and other memorials of the most distinguished men in every branch of the profession, of which, for upwards of 20 years he has been deservedly one of the most popular members.

Having been led into a private room, and strengthened with a couple of glasses of Madeira, Grimaldi had to sustain another, and a scarcely less severe trial, in receiving the farewells and good wishes of all his old associates. The street was thronged with people, who were waiting to see him come out, and as he entered the coach, which stood at the stage-door, gave him three hearty cheers, amid which he drove off. But all was not over yet, for hundreds followed the vehicle until it reached his house, and upon getting out he was again hailed with a similar overwhelming shout of approbation and regard; nor could the crowd be prevailed upon to disperse until he had appeared on the top of the steps, and made his farewell bow.

Grimaldi was too exhausted and nervous, after the trying scenes through which he had just passed, to make any calculation that night of what the benefit had produced; but the next day, being somewhat recovered, he entered into the matter, and found the result to be as follows:—The house cost him 210*l.*, the printing 70*l.* more, making the expenses 280*l.* The money taken at the doors amounted to rather more than 400*l.*, besides which he sold 150*l.* worth of tickets, making a total of 550*l.* Deducting the expenses, the clear profits of the benefit amounted to 270*l.*

There was another source of great profit, which must not be forgotten, namely, the number of anonymous communications Grimaldi received, enclosing sums of money, and wishing him a happy retirement. He received six letters, each containing 20*l.*, eleven containing 10*l.*, and sixteen containing 5*l.* each. Thus, the amount forwarded by unknown hands was no less than 310*l.*, which, added to the amount of profits just mentioned, makes a gross sum realized by this last benefit of 580*l.*, besides the 315*l.* which he had cleared at Sadlers Wells.

The highest tribute that can be paid to those who in secret forwarded their munificent donations, or to those who rendered him their valuable professional assistance, or to that large number who came forward to cheer the last public moments of a man who had so often, and so successfully, beguiled their leisure hours, is, that they smoothed the hard bed of premature and crippled old age, and rendered the slow decline of a life, scarcely in years past its prime, peaceful and contented. This benefit closed his theatrical existence, and filled his heart with deep and lasting emotions of gratitude.

Only one more circumstance connected with Grimaldi's theatrical existence remains to be told, and to that one we most anxiously and emphatically invite the attention of all who admire the drama, (and what man of thought or feeling does not?)—of all those who devote themselves to the cause of real charity,—and of all those who now, reaping large gains from the exercise of a glittering and dazzling profession, forget that youth and strength will not last for ever, and that the more intoxicating their triumphs now, the more probable is the advent of a time of adversity and decay.

Counting over his gains, and dwelling upon his helpless state, Grimaldi was not long in finding that even now, whenever his little salary at Sadlers Wells should cease, he would not have adequate means of support. There was only one source to which he could apply for relief, and to that source he at once turned.

It is well known to all our readers, that two charitable societies exist in London, called the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatrical Funds. They are distinct bodies, but were established with the same great and benevolent object. Every actor who, throughout his engagement at either of the large theatres, contributes a certain portion of his earnings to one of these funds, is entitled, if he should ever be reduced to the necessity of seeking it, to an annuity in proportion to the time for which he has contributed. To one of these most excellent institutions,—the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund,—Grimaldi had belonged for more than thirty years, promoting its interests not merely by his subscription, but by every means in his power. Feeling that in his hour of need and distress he had some claim upon its funds, he addressed the secretary, and stated the situation to which he was reduced. Early on the following morning he was visited by the gentleman to whom he had applied, who informed him that he was awarded a pension of 100*l.* a-year for the remainder of his life, and that he was deputed to pay him immediately the amount of one quarter in advance. His fears vanished at once, and he felt that want at all events could never be his portion.

It can be observed at no better place than this, that all applications for relief from these funds are known only to the respective committees, and that the names of all annuitants are kept strictly secret during their lives; that the distribution of their property is confided to gentlemen accustomed to act with the utmost delicacy and discrimination, and that some of the greatest ornaments of the English stage have been relieved in their old age, when their powers of amusing and delighting were gone,—not as poor pensioners, or objects of compassion, but as persons who, not forgetting their poor brethren in their affluence, were not themselves forgotten, when unexpected misfortune or sickness fell upon them.

The unfortunate young man to whom allusion has been frequently made in the course of the last few pages, was, as may easily be imagined, one of the chief sources of Grimaldi's care and trouble in his latter days. After remaining in his house for two months in a state of madness, he grew better, left one night to attend Sadlers Wells, where he was engaged, and was seen no more until the middle of the following year, when he again presented himself in a state of insanity, and was conveyed to his own lodgings and carefully tended. The next year he was dismissed from Sadlers Wells on account of his dissolute conduct, engaged at Drury Lane with the salary of eight pounds per week, most favourably received, and discharged at the end of the first season for his profligacy and drunkenness.

After this, he obtained an engagement for a month at the Pavilion in Whitechapel Road, but left that theatre also in disgrace, and fell into the lowest stage of wretchedness and poverty. His dress had fallen to rags, his feet were thrust into two worn-out slippers, his face was pale with disease, and squalid with dirt and want, and he was steeped in degradation. The man who might have earned with ease, with comfort and respectability, from six to seven hundred pounds a year, and have raised himself to far greater gains by common providence and care, was reduced to such a dreadful state of destitution and filth, that even his own parents could scarcely recognise him.

He was again received, and again found a home with his sick father. At Christmas, 1829, he obtained a situation at the Coburg, through the kindness of Davidge, and there he remained until Easter, 1830, when he took the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors' Act, to relieve himself from the creditors who were hunting him down. His support in prison and contingent expenses, amounting to forty pounds, were all paid by his father.

He next accepted an engagement at Edinburgh, which turned out a failure; and another at Manchester, at Christmas, 1830, by which he gained a few pounds. He then returned to the Coburg, where he might have almost permanently remained, but for his own misconduct, which once again cast him on the world.

In the following autumn, the son again presented himself at his father's door, reduced to a state of beggary and want not to be described. His mother, who had suffered greatly from his misdeeds, outrageous conduct, and gross and violent abuse, besought his father not to receive him, or aid him again, remembering how much he had already wasted the small remnant of his means only to minister to his extravagance and folly. But he could not witness his helpless and miserable state without compassion, and he was once more forgiven, once more became an inmate of the house, and remained there in a state of utter dependence.

In 1832, Sadlers Wells was let for one season to Mrs. Fitzwilliam and Mr. W. H. Williams. They retained Grimaldi for some little time, but finding that he must be dismissed very shortly, he made preparations for meeting the consequent reduction of his income, by giving up the house in which he had lived for several years, and taking a cottage at Woolwich, whither he had an additional inducement to retire, in the hope that change of air might prove beneficial to his wife, who had already been ill for some time.

They repaired to their new house in the latter end of September, and in the beginning of November the son received a letter from a brother actor, entreating him to perform for a benefit, at Sadlers Wells. His reception was so cordial and his acting so good, that on the very same evening, notwithstanding all that had previously passed, he was offered an engagement for the ensuing Christmas at the Coburg, and the next day, on his return to Woolwich, he communicated the intelligence. The following day was his birthday,—he completed his thirtieth year that morning,—and before it had passed over, the then lessee of the Queen's Theatre waited upon him, and offered him an engagement for a short time at a weekly salary of 4*l*. He agreed to take it, and arranged to begin on the following Monday, November 25, in a part called Black Cæsar.

It was sorely against his father's will that he went to fulfil this engagement, for his health had been waning for some time, and he was fearful that he might relapse into his old habits. However, he was determined to go, and borrowing some money of his father, as was his usual wont, he left Woolwich on the Sunday morning.

On the Wednesday Grimaldi had occasion to go to town, and eagerly embraced it as an opportunity for seeing his son, to whom, despite all the anxiety and losses he had caused him, he was still most tenderly attached. He wrote to him, naming the friend's house at which he would be found, and the young man came. He looked in excellent health—was in high spirits, and boasted of his success in terms which from all accounts it appeared were justified by its extent. Shortly after dinner he left, observing that, as he had to appear in the first scene of the first piece, he had no time to lose. His father never saw him more.

Grimaldi returned to Woolwich next day, and anxiously hoped on Sunday to see the misguided man to dinner, agreeably to a promise he had made. The day passed away, but he did not come; a few more days elapsed, and then he received an intimation from a stranger that his son was ill. He immediately wrote to a friend (Mr. Glendinning the printer), requesting him to ascertain the nature of his indisposition, which he feared was only the effect of some new intemperance, and if it should appear necessary, to procure him medical assistance. For two days he heard nothing; but this did not alarm him, for he entertained no doubt that his son's illness would disappear when the fumes of the liquor he had drunk had evaporated.

On the 11th of December a friend came to his house as he was sitting by his wife's bed, to which she was confined by illness, and when, with much difficulty, he had descended to the parlour, told him with great care and delicacy that his son was dead.

In one instant every feeling of decrepitude or bodily weakness left him, his limbs recovered their original vigour, all his lassitude and debility vanished, a difficulty of breathing under which he had long laboured disappeared, and starting from his seat he rushed to his wife's chamber, tearing, without the smallest difficulty, up a flight of stairs, which a quarter of an hour before it had taken him ten minutes to climb. He hurried to her bedside, told her that her son was dead, heard her first passionate exclamation of grief, and, falling into a chair, was once again an enfeebled and crippled old man.

The remains of the young man were interred, a few days afterwards, in the burial-ground of Whitfield's Tabernacle, in Tottenham Court Road; but some circumstances, apparently of a suspicious nature, being afterwards rumoured about, and it being whispered that marks of blows had been seen upon his head by those who laid him out, an inquest was holden upon the young man's body. Grimaldi states that the body was exhumed; from some passages in the newspapers of the day it would appear that an informal inquest was held, and that the body was not disinterred. Be this as it may, it was proved before the coroner that his death had arisen from the natural consequences of a mis-spent life; that his body was covered with a fearful inflammation, and that he had died in a state of wild and furious madness, rising from his bed and dressing himself in stage-costume to act snatches of the parts to which he had been most accustomed, and requiring to be held down to die, by strong manual force. This closing scene of his life took place at a public house in Pitt Street, Tottenham Court Road, and here the dismal tragedy ended.

It was long before Grimaldi in any degree recovered this great shock; his wife never did. She lingered on in a state of great suffering for two years afterwards, until death happily relieved her.

He was now left alone in the world; he had always been a domesticated man, delighting in nothing more than in the society of his relations and friends; and the condition of solitary desolation in which he was now left nearly drove him into a state of melancholy madness. His crippled limbs and broken bodily health rendered it necessary to his existence that he should have an attentive nurse, and occasionally at least cheerful society; finding his situation wholly insupportable, he resolved to return to town, and wrote to a friend, whose wife was his his only remaining relative, to procure a small house for him in his own neighbourhood, where he too had lived so long and happily. A neat little dwelling, next door to this friend's house, in Southampton Street, Pentonville, being at that time to let, was taken and furnished for him, and thither he removed without more delay. Many of his old friends came from time to time to cheer him with a few minutes' conversation, and he experienced the warmest and kindest treatment from his neighbours, and from Mr. Richard Hughes, who bore in mind his promise to his dying sister, to the last moment of Grimaldi's life.

He concludes his memoirs by taking a more cheerful view of his condition than could well have been expected of a man suffering so much, and ends in these words:—

"My histrionic acquaintance frequently favour me with their company, when we together review past scenes, and contrast them with those of the present time. My esteemed friend, Alfred Bunn, has been with me this very day, and I expect to see my amiable patroness, if she will permit me to call her so, Miss Kelly, to-morrow.

"In my solitary hours—and in spite of all the kindness of my friends I have many of them—my thoughts often dwell upon the past: and there is one circumstance which always affords me unmitigated satisfaction; it is simply that I cannot recollect one single instance in which I have intentionally wronged man, woman, or child, and this gives me great satisfaction and comfort.

"This is the 18th of December, 1836. I was born on the 18th of December, 1779, and consequently have completed my fifty-seventh year.

"Life is a game we are bound to play—
The wise enjoy it, fools grow sick of it;
Losers, we find, have the stakes to pay,
That winners may laugh, for that's the trick of it.

"J. Grimaldi."

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

Grimaldi died on the 31st of May, 1837, having survived the completion of the last chapter of his biography just five months, during which his health had considerably improved, although his bodily energies and physical powers had remained in the same state of hopeless prostration. Having gradually recovered the effects of the severe mental shocks which had crowded upon him in his decline, he had regained his habitual serenity and cheerfulness, and appeared likely to live, and even to enjoy life—incompatible with all enjoyment as his condition

would seem to have been—for many years. He had no other wish than to be happy in the society of his old friends; and uttered no other complaint than that, in their absence, he sometimes found his solitude heavy and irksome. He looked forward to the publication of his manuscript with an anxiety which it is impossible to describe, and imagined that the day on which he exhibited it in a complete form to his friends, would be the proudest of his life.

He was destined never to experience this harmless gratification; the sudden dissolution which deprived him of it, mercifully released him from all the pains and sufferings which could not fail to have been, sooner or later, the attendants upon that state of death in life to which he had been untimely reduced.

It had been Grimaldi's habit for some time previous to his death, to spend a portion of each evening at a tavern hard by, where the society of a few respectable persons, resident in the neighbourhood, in some measure compensated him for the many long hours he spent by his lonely fireside. Utterly bereft of the use of his limbs, he used to be carried backwards and forwards (he had only a few doors to go) on the shoulders of a man.

On the night of his death, he was carried home in the usual manner, and cheerfully bidding his companion good night, observed that he should be ready for him on the morrow at the customary time. He had not long been in bed when his housekeeper, fancying she heard a noise in his room, hurried down, but all was quiet: she went in again, later in the night, and found him dead. The body was cold, for he had been dead some hours.

A coroner's inquest was held on the following day. The testimony of the medical gentlemen who had been promptly called in, fully established the fact that his death had arisen from causes purely natural; and the jury at once returned a verdict that he had died by the visitation of God.

He was buried on the ensuing Monday, June the sixth, in the burying ground of St. James's Chapel, on Pentonville Hill. In the next grave lie the bones of his friend, Mr. Charles Dibdin, so frequently mentioned in these volumes; the author of many of the pieces in which he shone in his best days, and of many of the songs with which he was wont to set his audience in a roar.

Any attempted summary of Grimaldi's peculiarities in this place would be an impertinence. There are many who remember him, and they need not be told how rich his humour was; to those who do not recollect him in his great days, it would be impossible to convey any adequate idea of his extraordinary performances. There are no standards to compare him with, or models to judge him by; all his excellences were his own, and there are none resembling them among the pantomime actors of the present day.

This is not said with any view of depreciating the abilities of the many clever actors we have in this peculiar department. Among a variety o others, Smith and Payne of Covent Garden (not of Lombard Street), and Wieland of Drury Lane, may be mentioned as possessing grotesque humour of no ordinary kind; while for mere feats of tumbling dexterity, Brown, King, and Gibson of the Adelphi, perhaps, stand unrivalled. It is no disparagement to all or any of these actors of pantomime, to say that the genuine droll, the grimacing, filching, irresistible clown, left the stage with Grimaldi, and, though often heard of, has never since been seen.

In private, Grimaldi was a general favourite, not only among his equals, but with his superiors and inferiors. That he was a man of the kindest heart, and the most child-like simplicity, nobody who has read the foregoing pages can for a moment doubt. He was innocent of all caution in worldly matters, and has been known, on the seller's warranty, to give forty guineas for a gold watch, which, as it subsequently turned out, would have been dear at ten. Among many acts of private goodness may be mentioned—although he shrunk from the slightest allusion to the story—his release of a brother actor from Lancaster jail, under circumstances which showed a pure benevolence of heart and delicacy of feeling, that would have done honour to a prince.

With far more temptations to indulge in the pleasures of the table than most men encounter, Grimaldi was through life remarkably temperate, never having been seen, indeed, in a state of intoxication. But he was a great eater, as most pantomime actors are, who enjoy good health, and abstain from dram-drinking; and it was supposed, at the time of his decease, that an attack of indigestion consequent upon too hearty a supper at too late an hour, materially hastened, if it did not actually occasion, his death.

Many readers will ridicule the idea of a clown being a man of great feeling and sensibility: Grimaldi was so, notwithstanding, and suffered most severely from the afflictions which befel him. The loss of his wife, to whom he had been long and devotedly attached, preyed upon his mind to a greater or less extent, for many years. The reckless career and dreadful death of his only son, bowed him down with grief. The young man's notorious conduct had embittered the best portion of his existence: and his sudden death, when a better course seemed opening before him, had well nigh terminated his unhappy father's days.

But although in the weakened state in which he then was, the sad event preying alike upon his mind and body, changed Grimaldi's appearance, in a few weeks, to that of a shrunken imbecile old man; and although, when he had in some measure recovered from this heavy blow, he had to mourn the loss of his wife, with whom he had lived happily for more than thirty years, he survived the trials to which he had been exposed, and lived to recover his cheerfulness and peace.

Deprived of all power of motion; doomed to bear, at a time of life when he might reasonably have looked forward to many years of activity and exertion, the worst bodily evils of the most helpless old age; condemned to drag out the remainder of his days in a solitary chamber, when all those who make up the sum of home were cold in death, his existence would seem to have been a weary one indeed; but he was patient and resigned under all these trials, and in time grew contented, and even happy.

This strong endurance of griefs so keen, and reverses so poignant, may perhaps teach more strongly than a hundred homilies, that there are no afflictions which time will not soften, and fortitude overcome. Let those who smile at the deduction of so trite a moral from the biography of a clown, reflect, that the fewer the resources of a man's own mind, the greater his merit in rising superior to misfortune. Let them remember too, that in this case the light and life of a brilliant theatre were exchanged in an instant for the gloom and sadness of a dull sick room.

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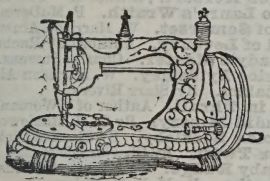

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